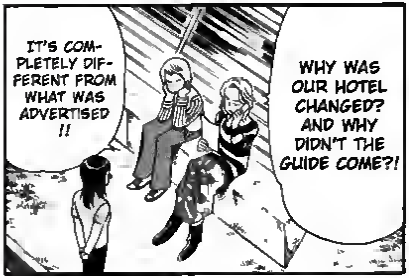
S2S MANGA

CHAPTER 55 TRAVEL AGENCY FRAUD I

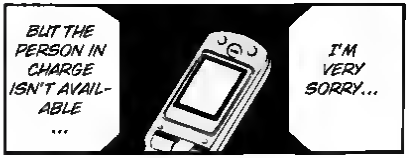
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS PLACE!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE WE ACTUALLY PAID FOR THIS!!
WE DIDN'T COME ALL THE WAY TO GUAM JUST TO STAY IN A DUMP!
THE TOUR GUIDE THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO COME NEVER CAME!
YEAH! SAME THING GOES FOR THIS SHOPPING TRIP INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PACKAGE...
Save on tour fees, splurge on shopping!!
OH, COME ON! EVEN IF THAT WAS THE CASE, WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN INFORMED BEFOREHAND!
THE HIGH-CLASS HOTEL WE WERE SCHEDULED TO STAY IN IS UNDER RENOVATION, SO MAYBE THERE WAS NO CHOICE ...

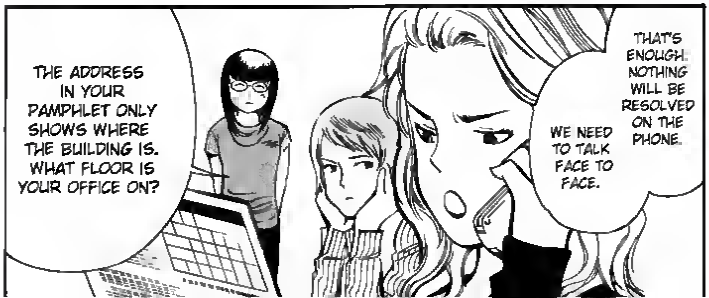
S2S

I SWEAR, IT'S HIGHWAY ROBBERY!!
IT'S ALL THAT TOUR AGENCY'S FAULT! I'M GONNA GIVE THEM A PIECE OF MY MIND WHEN WE GET BACK TO JAPAN!!

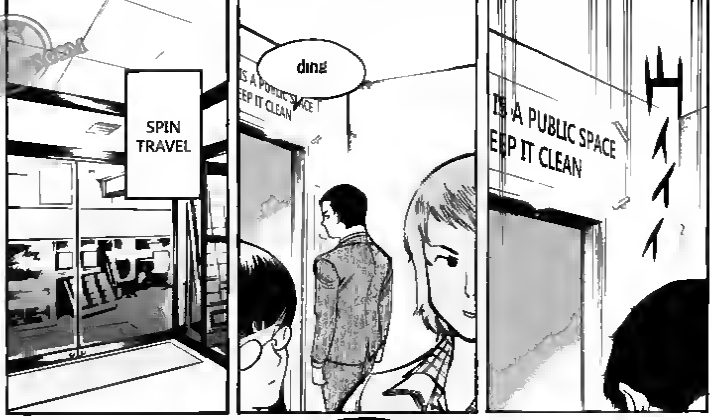

IT'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WAS ADVERTISED!!
WHY WAS OUR HOTEL CHANGED? AND WHY DIDN'T THE GUIDE COME?!

Japan--
WHAT'S GOING ON?!

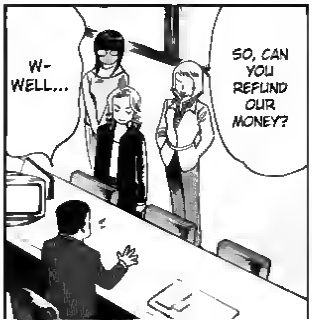

BUT THE PERSON IN CHARGE ISN'T AVAILABLE ...
I'M VERY SORRY...

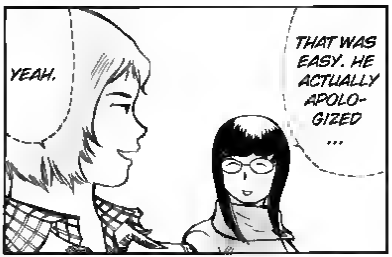

THE ADDRESS IN YOUR PAMPHLET ONLY SHOWS WHERE THE BUILDING IS. WHAT FLOOR IS YOUR OFFICE ON?
THAT'S ENOUGH. NOTHING WILL BE RESOLVED ON THE PHONE.
WE NEED TO TALK FACE TO FACE.

COULD YOU WAIT FOR ME AT THE LOBBY ON THE 1ST FLOOR?
I'LL GUIDE YOU THERE MYSELF, SO...
...ALL RIGHT, OUR AGENCY IS ON THE 10TH FLOOR
HAKUSEI BUILDING... IS THIS THE PLACE?
LOOKS LIKE IT.
MY APOLOGIES FOR THE OTHER DAY. DON'T WORRY, THE PERSON IN CHARGE IS AVAILABLE TODAY...
ARE YOU MASUMURA-SAMA? SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING!

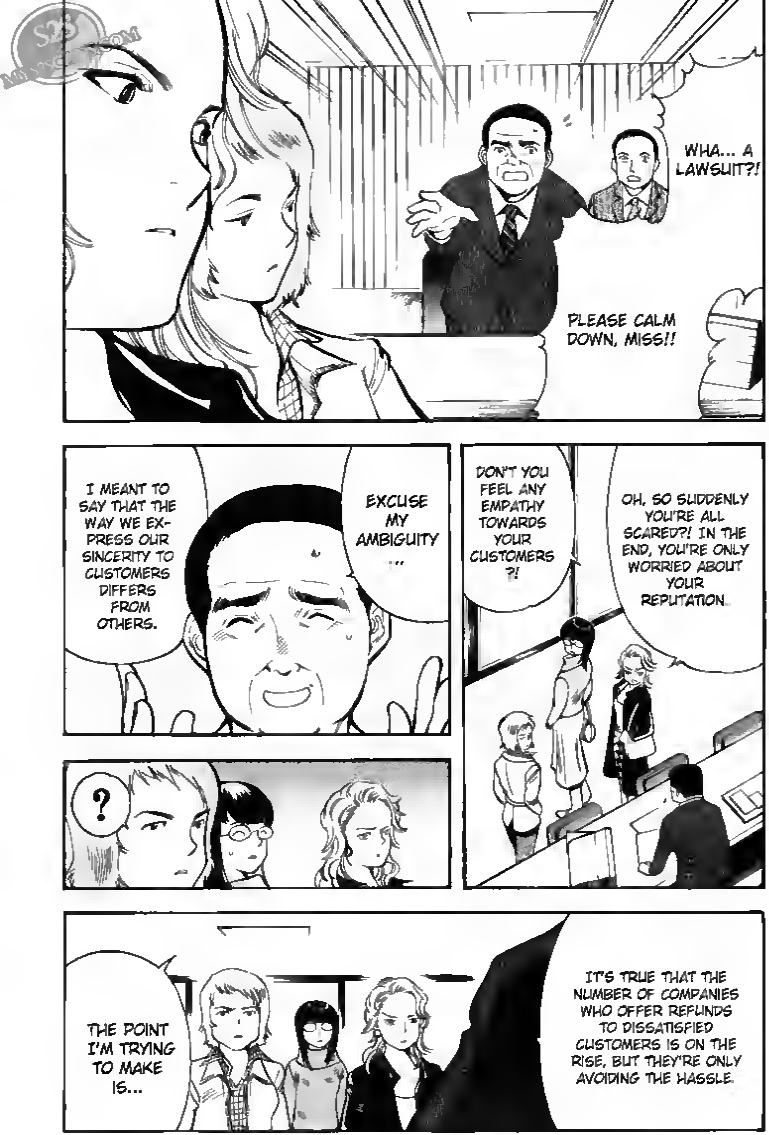

SPIN TRAVEL
ding
IS A PUBLIC SPACE
EEP IT CLEAN

I'M TERRIBLY SORRY FOR THE OTHER DAY!! IT WAS ALL A MISTAKE ON OUR PART.
SPIN TRAVEL DIRECTOR
KAMIOKA EISUKE


W-WELL...
SO, CAN YOU REFUND OUR MONEY?

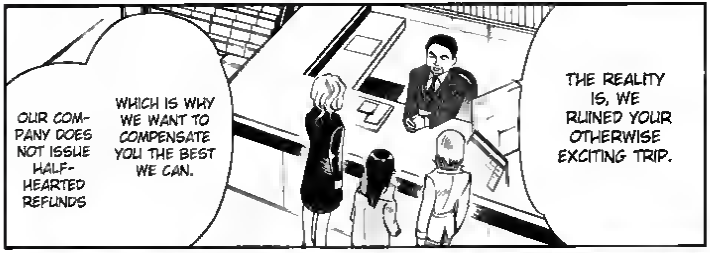

YEAH.
THAT WAS EASY. HE ACTUALLY APOLOGIZED ...

COME ON! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CHANGED THE CONTENT OF THE TOUR WITHOUT OUR CONSENT!
DOESN'T THAT COUNT AS A BREACH OF CONTRACT?
IF IT WAS ANOTHER AGENCY, THEY'D REFUND US IMMEDIATELY.
YEAH... A REFUND WOULD BE THE OBVIOUS CHOICE
MAYBE, BUT EVERY COMPANY HAS ITS OWN BUSINESS POLICY...
.....
FINE, SO BE IT...
--WE'RE GONNA FILE A LAWSUIT AGAINST YOU!
JUST LOOK AT THAT STUPID SMILE ON HIS FACE... IS HE LOOKING DOWN ON US JUST BECAUSE WE'RE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS?
.....


WHA... A LAWSUIT?!
PLEASE CALM DOWN, MISS!!
EXCUSE MY AMBIGUITY ...
I MEANT TO SAY THAT THE WAY WE EXPRESS OUR SINCERITY TO CUSTOMERS DIFFERS FROM OTHERS.
DON'T YOU FEEL ANY EMPATHY TOWARDS YOUR CUSTOMERS?!
OH, SO SUDDENLY YOU'RE ALL SCARED?! IN THE END, YOU'RE ONLY WORRIED ABOUT YOUR REPUTATION.
?
IT'S TRUE THAT THE NUMBER OF COMPANIES WHO OFFER REFUNDS TO DISSATISFIED CUSTOMERS IS ON THE RISE, BUT THEY'RE ONLY AVOIDING THE HASSLE.
THE POINT I'M TRYING TO MAKE IS...

.....
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT ...?

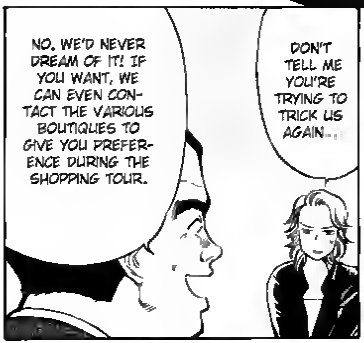
WILL YOU BE TRULY SATISFIED JUST BY GETTING ALL YOUR MONEY BACK?


THE REALITY IS, WE RUINED YOUR OTHERWISE EXCITING TRIP.
WHICH IS WHY WE WANT TO COMPENSATE YOU THE BEST WE CAN.
OUR COMPANY DOES NOT ISSUE HALF-HEARTED REFUNDS

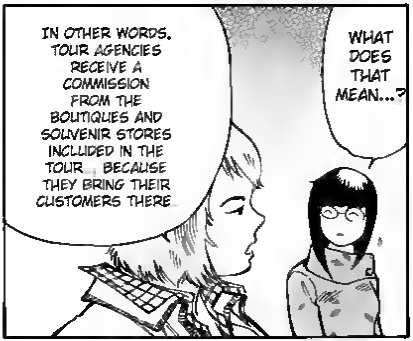
TO PROVE THAT, WE'RE OFFERING YOU...
A SPECIAL DISCOUNT ON A TRIP YOU'LL SURELY ENJOY.
A SPECIAL DIS-COUNT?

S2S

Guam
グアム
4 Days 3 Nights Shopping Tour!
IF YOU'RE STILL INTERESTED IN GUAM, WE CAN OFFER YOU THIS PACKAGE...
WE ALSO HAVE PACKAGES FOR TOURS TO PLACES SUCH AS PARIS, PHUKET, AND SEOUL.

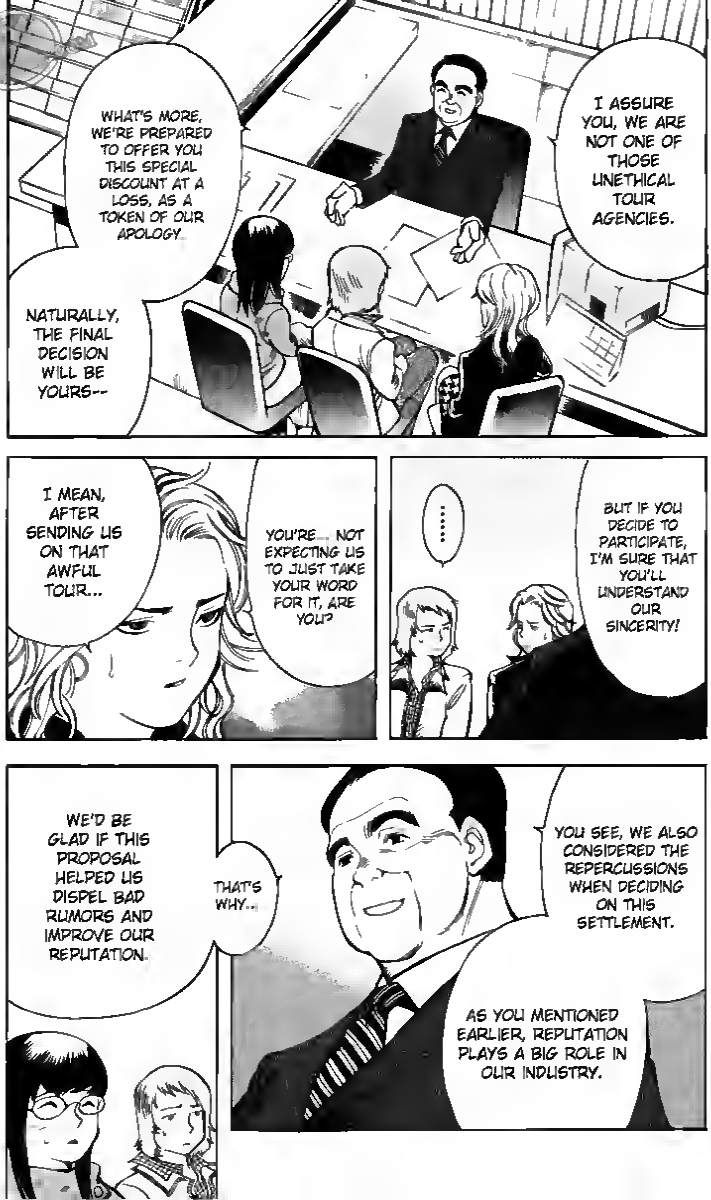

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE TRYING TO TRICK US AGAIN...
NO. WE'D NEVER DREAM OF IT! IF YOU WANT, WE CAN EVEN CONTACT THE VARIOUS BOUTIQUES TO GIVE YOU PREFERENCE DURING THE SHOPPING TOUR.

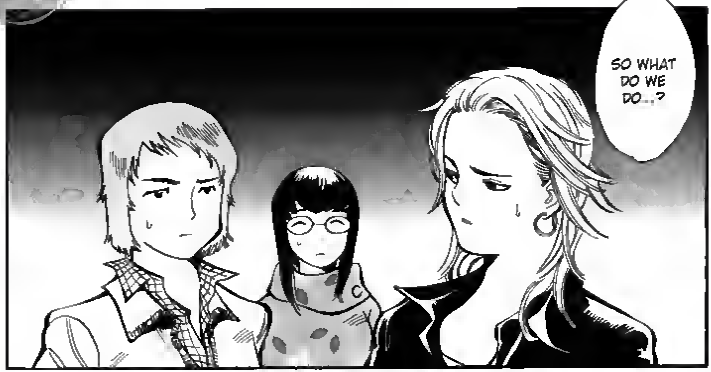
ALL AT A QUARTER OF THE MARKET PRICE.
.....

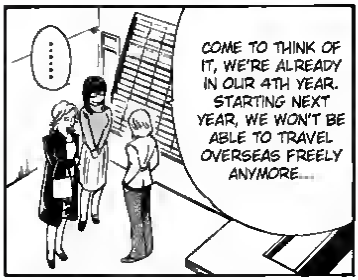

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN...?
IN OTHER WORDS, TOUR AGENCIES RECEIVE A COMMISSION FROM THE BOUTIQUES AND SOUVENIR STORES INCLUDED IN THE TOUR... BECAUSE THEY BRING THEIR CUSTOMERS THERE.

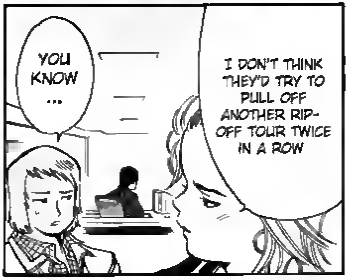
I'VE HEARD OF THIS BEFORE...
APPARENTLY, TRAVEL AGENCIES RECEIVE A KICK-BACK FROM SHOPPING TRIPS.

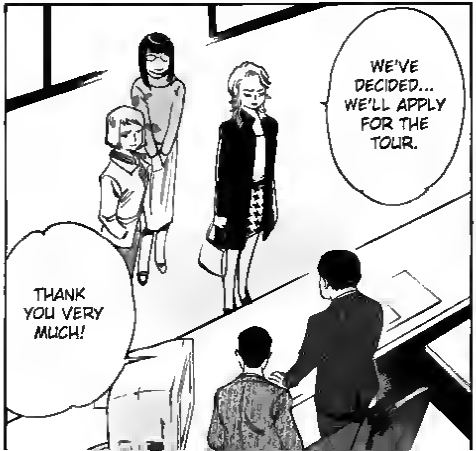
IMPRESSIVE! YOU'RE VERY WELL VERSED!
IT IS A FACT THAT SOME TRAVEL AGENCIES RECEIVE HIGH COMMISSION PAYMENTS FROM STORES.
THERE ARE EVEN EXTREME CASES WHERE STORES LOCK THEIR EXITS AFTER LEADING THEIR CUSTOMERS THERE, IN ORDER TO FORCE THEM TO BUY.
SERI-OUSLY ?!
THAT'S TERRIBLE !!
IT'S NOT JUST WITH SHOPPING. EVEN THE INTERPRETER, DRIVER, AND LOCAL COORDINATOR RECEIVE SOME SORT OF KICKBACK..
IT'S VERY COMMON FOR THE CUSTOMER TO BE EX-PLOITED.
.....

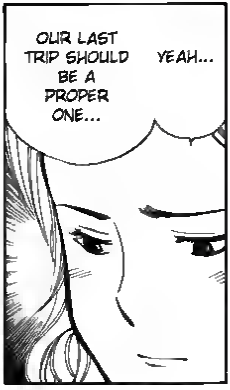

I ASSURE YOU, WE ARE NOT ONE OF THOSE UNETHICAL TOUR AGENCIES.
WHAT'S MORE, WE'RE PREPARED TO OFFER YOU THIS SPECIAL DISCOUNT AT A LOSS, AS A TOKEN OF OUR APOLOGY.
NATURALLY, THE FINAL DECISION WILL BE YOURS--
BUT IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, I'M SURE THAT YOU'LL UNDERSTAND OUR SINCERITY!
.....
YOU'RE... NOT EXPECTING US TO JUST TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT, ARE YOU?
I MEAN, AFTER SENDING US ON THAT AWFUL TOUR...
YOU SEE, WE ALSO CONSIDERED THE REPERCUSSIONS WHEN DECIDING ON THIS SETTLEMENT.
AS YOU MENTIONED EARLIER, REPUTATION PLAYS A BIG ROLE IN OUR INDUSTRY.
THAT'S WHY...
WE'D BE GLAD IF THIS PROPOSAL HELPED US DISPEL BAD RUMORS AND IMPROVE OUR REPUTATION.


SO WHAT DO WE DO...?

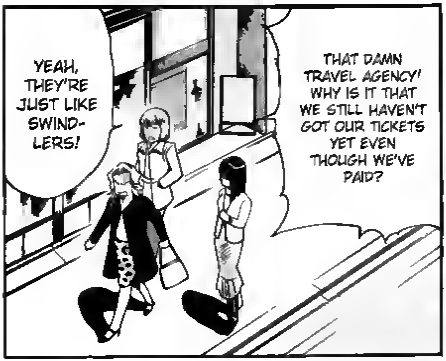

.....
COME TO THINK OF IT, WE'RE ALREADY IN OUR 4TH YEAR. STARTING NEXT YEAR, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO TRAVEL OVERSEAS FREELY ANYMORE...

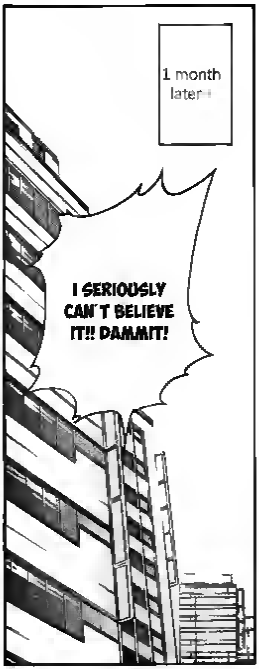

YOU KNOW ...
I DON'T THINK THEY'D TRY TO PULL OFF ANOTHER RIP-OFF TOUR TWICE IN A ROW


WE'VE DECIDED... WE'LL APPLY FOR THE TOUR.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

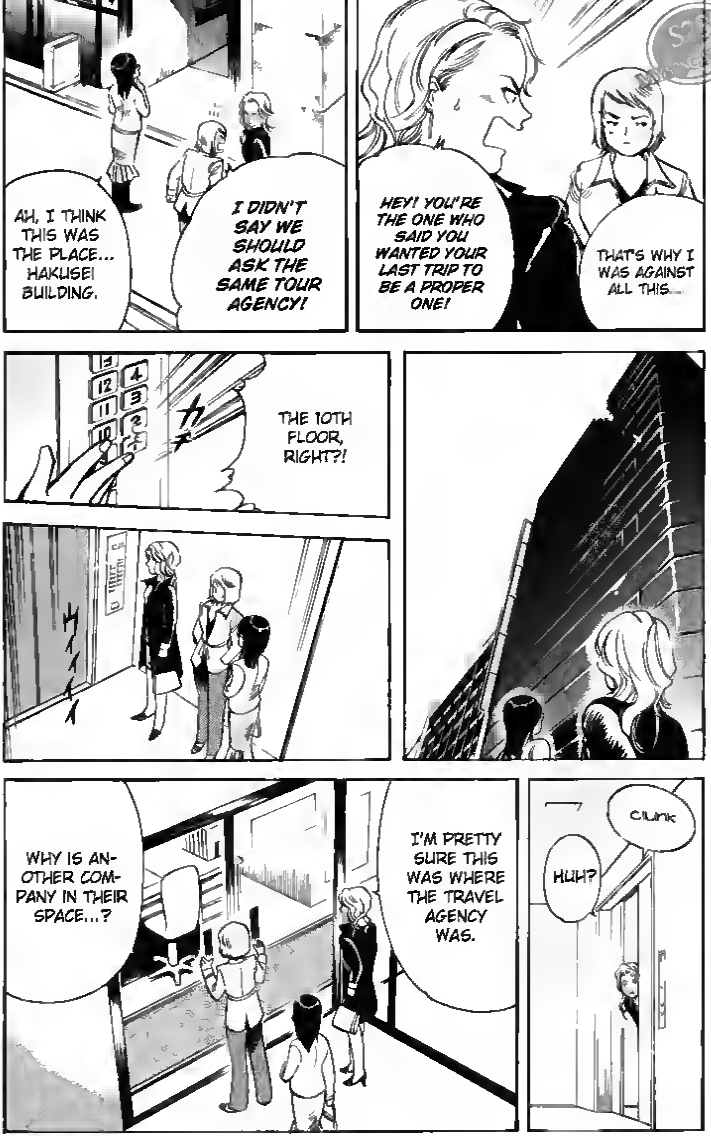

OUR LAST TRIP SHOULD BE A PROPER ONE...
YEAH...

I SWEAR ON OUR COMPANY'S HONOR...
THIS TIME, I PROMISE YOU THAT NONE OF THAT WILL HAPPEN AGAIN.

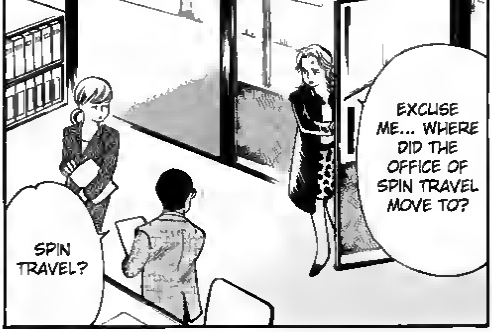

YEAH, THEY'RE JUST LIKE SWINDLERS!
THAT DAMN TRAVEL AGENCY! WHY IS IT THAT WE STILL HAVEN'T GOT OUR TICKETS YET EVEN THOUGH WE'VE PAID?

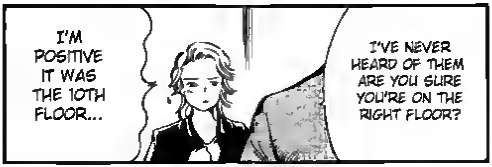

1 month later
I SERIOUSLY CAN'T BELIEVE IT!! DAMMIT!

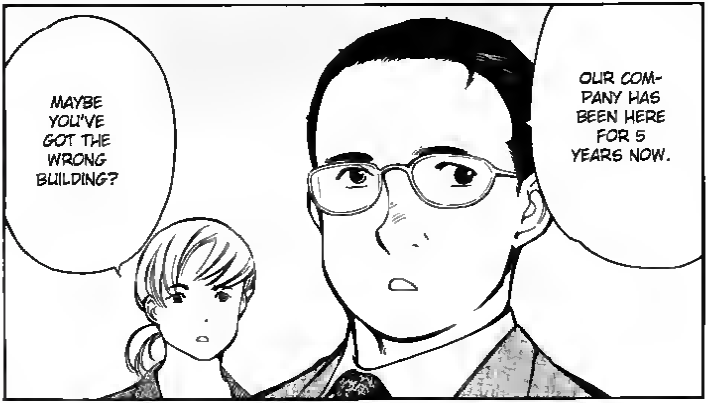
YOU SAW THE STUPID GRINS ON THEIR FACES WHEN WE MADE A COMPLAINT, RIGHT? EITHER WAY, I WON'T BE SATISFIED TILL I GIVE THEM A PIECE OF MY MIND!
WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER IF WE MADE A POLICE REPORT ...?

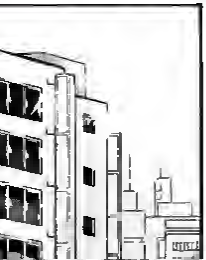

AH, I THINK THIS WAS THE PLACE... HAKUSEI BUILDING.
I DIDN'T SAY WE SHOULD ASK THE SAME TOUR AGENCY!
HEY! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID YOU WANTED YOUR LAST TRIP TO BE A PROPER ONE!
THAT'S WHY I WAS AGAINST ALL THIS...
THE 10TH FLOOR, RIGHT?!
WHY IS ANOTHER COMPANY IN THEIR SPACE...?
I'M PRETTY SURE THIS WAS WHERE THE TRAVEL AGENCY WAS.
CLUNK
HUH?

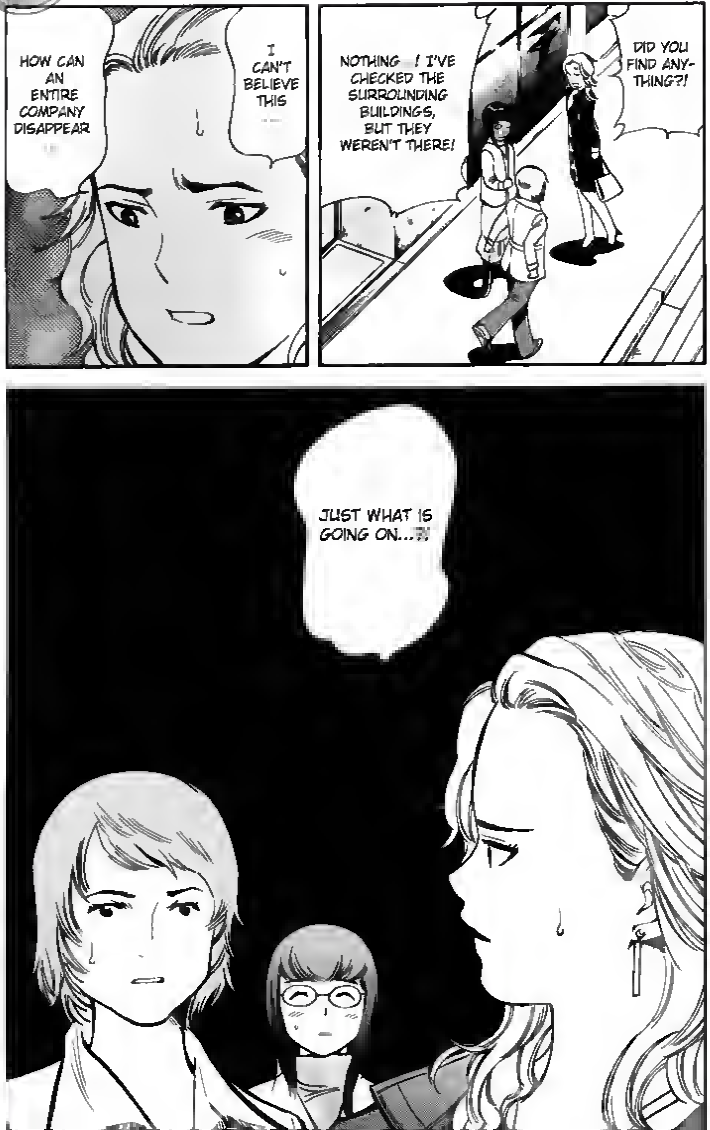
S2S
Manga Group

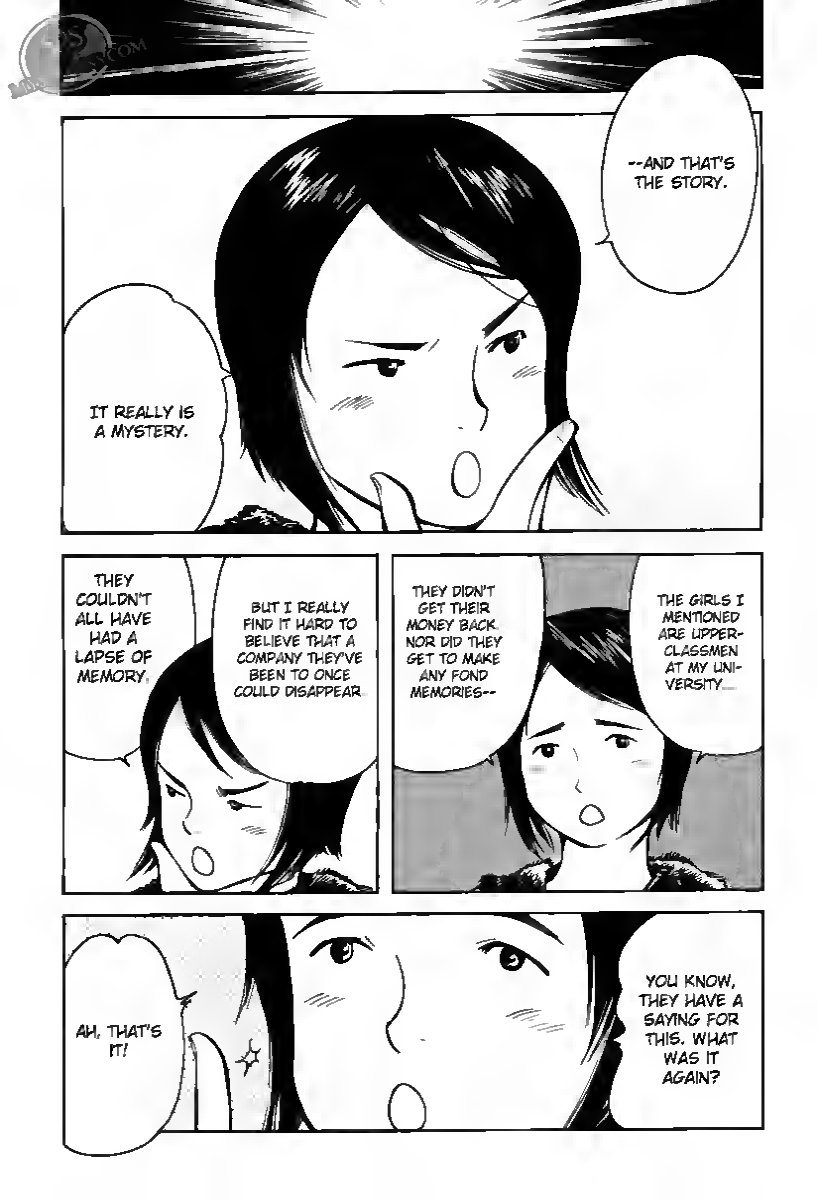









HOW CAN AN ENTIRE COMPANY DISAPPEAR
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS
NOTHING ! I'VE CHECKED THE SURROUNDING BUILDINGS, BUT THEY WEREN'T THERE!
DID YOU FIND ANY-THING?!
JUST WHAT IS GOING ON...?!


--AND THAT'S THE STORY.
IT REALLY IS A MYSTERY.
THEY COULDN'T ALL HAVE HAD A LAPSE OF MEMORY.
BUT I REALLY FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT A COMPANY THEY'VE BEEN TO ONCE COULD DISAPPEAR.
THEY DIDN'T GET THEIR MONEY BACK. NOR DID THEY GET TO MAKE ANY FOND MEMORIES--
THE GIRLS I MENTIONED ARE UPPER-CLASSMEN AT MY UNI-VERSITY...
AH, THAT'S IT!
YOU KNOW, THEY HAVE A SAYING FOR THIS. WHAT WAS IT AGAIN?

IT'S AS IF THEY THEY WERE OVER A SPELL, RIGHT KUROSAKI-SAN!!
I THINK YOU MEAN "UNDER A SPELL"...

DID YOU... WAKE ME UP FROM MY COMFORTABLE NAP JUST TO TELL ME THAT...?
BUT THEN...

IT'S A FACT THAT MY SENIORS WERE CHEATED OF THEIR MONEY, SO DOESN'T THAT MAKE IT A FRAUD?
THEN THAT'D MAKE YOU THE BEST PERSON TO ASK, KUROSAKI-SAN
.....

UNFORTUNATELY, I'M NOT INTERESTED
IN TROUBLES CAUSED BY YOUR "FRIENDSHIP" GAMES."
MY UPPERCLASSMAN LOST A VALUABLE GRADUATION TRIP WITH HER FRIENDS
DON'T YOU FEEL SORRY FOR HER?
NOT AT ALL.
Slam
YEAH...?
THAT UPPERCLASSMAN
WHERE IS SHE?
...WHERE IS SHE?
EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE SWINDLERS

YEAAAAH!
JUST RE-MEMBER
I'M ONLY INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT ABOUT THE SHIRO-SAGI.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT ANY-THING ELSE!
SURE, SURE!

Kurosagi (the black swindler)

Written by Takeshi Natsuhara, Illustrated by Kuromaru

KUROSAGI CHAPTER 55

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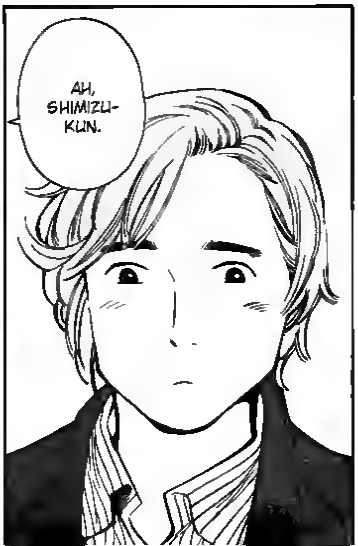
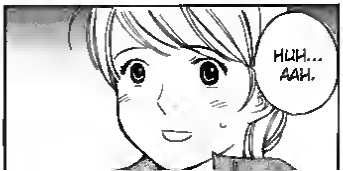
CHAPTER 56 TRAVEL AGENCY FRAUD II

SEIWA UNIVERSITY—
YOSHIKAWA.

YOSHIKAWA, WHY DIDN'T YOU COME TO THE PARTY WITH THE ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT? I THOUGHT MISHIMA INVITED YOU.
Mishima Yukari
IT'S BEEN AGES!


AH, SHIMIZU-KUN.


HUH... AAH.

SORRY, YUKARI DID INVITE ME...
BUT AT THE TIME... I HAD A LITTLE ERRAND TO RUN.
YOSHIKAWA... I'M GUESSING YOU DON'T LIKE PARTIES?
HUH. WELL.
I SUPPOSE I GET A LITTLE NERVOUS WHEN I'M SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE I DON'T KNOW...
THE ONLY PERSON I KNOW FROM THE ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT IS YOU, SHIMIZU-KUN.
ISN'T IT GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME TO BE THERE!
.....
AH, WELL...
I GUESS YOU'RE NOT THE TYPE TO GO PARTYING, YOSHIKAWA.
YOU DON'T SEEM TO BE INTERESTED IN GUYS AND ALL.

.....
NOT REALLY.
THEN HOW ABOUT WE GO SOMEWHERE TO EAT AFTER CLASSES THIS FRIDAY?
AH, OKAY.
SORRY, SHIMIZU-KUN!
OH SHOOT! I'M SUPPOSED TO SEE PRO-FESSOR AOKI AT HIS OFFICE ABOUT MY REPORT!
HUH
SURE, ALL OF US?
I'LL SEND A MAIL TO YUKARI!
WHA?! NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I...!
Bye Bye
.....

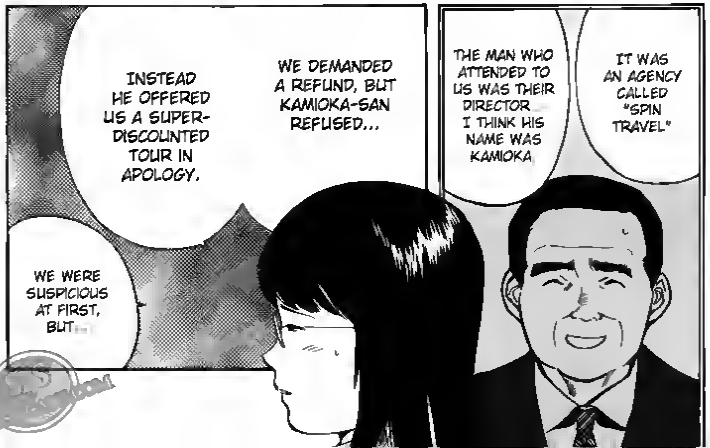
PRO-FESSOR, SORRY I'M LATE!!
HEY, YOSHIKAWA-KUN
NO WORRIES I'M STILL BUSY TIDYING UP THE ROOM
—BY THE WAY, YOSHIKAWA-KUN..
YOUR FRIEND FROM THE LITERATURE DEPARTMENT CAME BY JUST NOW.
5
APPARENTLY, THE 4TH YEAR GIRL WAS INVOLVED IN A FRAUD, AND SHE CAME TO ME FOR ADVICE.
BUT THEN YOUR FRIEND, YUKARI-CHAN, SHOWED UP SAYING "I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO SOMEONE RELIABLE~"
AND WHISKED HER AWAY
HM? YOU MEAN YUKARI?
YEAH, AND BEFORE THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER GIRL... HER 4TH YEAR SENIOR ALSO STOPPED BY.

HAVE ANY IDEA WHO THAT RELIABLE PERSON IS?
MAYBE SOMEONE FROM THE POLICE?
……
KUROSAKI-SAN, LET ME INTRODUCE SOMEONE TO YOU!
THIS IS MY SENIOR, ENISHI KYOUKO-SEN...
DONUTS
KURO-SAKI-SA~N
WHAT WAS HE LIKE?
HM?
PAI

THE SHIROSAGI WHO CHEATED YOU.
I CAME ALL THE WAY HERE TO ASK YOU ABOUT HIM, Y KNOW.

BUT ON ARRIVAL OUR HOTEL WAS CHANGED, THE GUIDE NEVER SHOWED UP... WELL, IN SHORT, IT WAS REALLY DODGY.
SO WHEN WE GOT BACK, WE WENT TO THE TRAVEL AGENCY TO COMPLAIN.

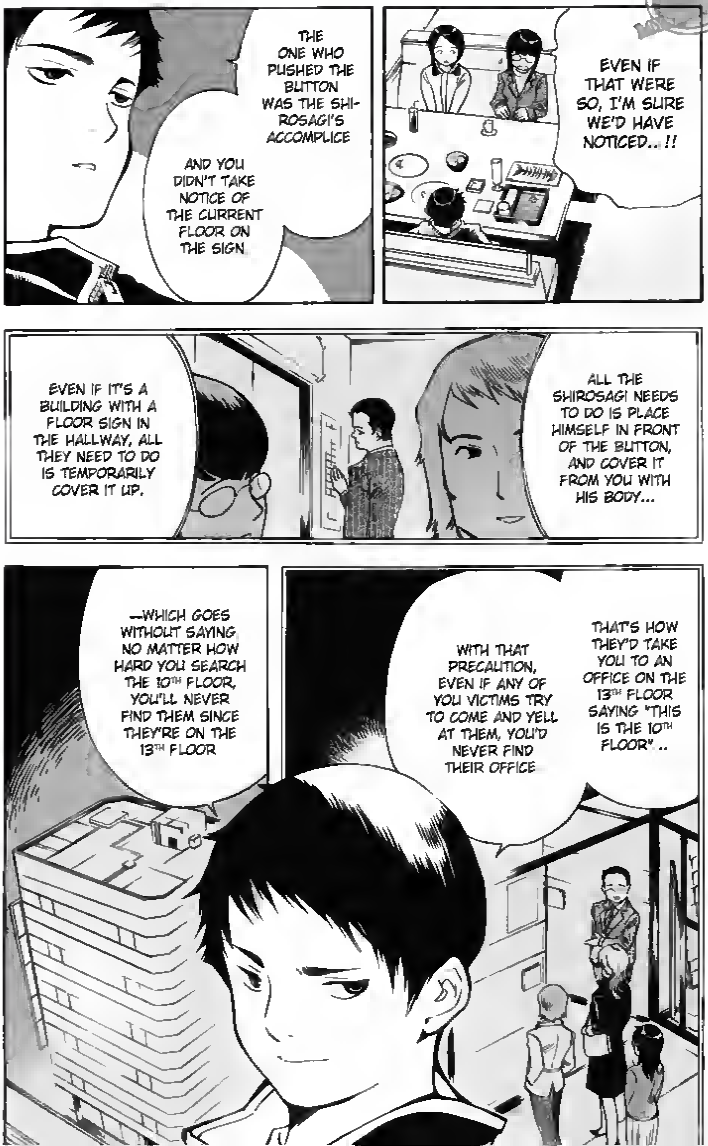
AH, RIGHT...
ABOUT A MONTH AND A HALF AGO, MY FRIENDS AND I WENT FOR A GRADUATION TRIP TO GUAM...


IT WAS AN AGENCY CALLED "SPIN TRAVEL"
THE MAN WHO ATTENDED TO US WAS THEIR DIRECTOR... I THINK HIS NAME WAS KAMIOKA.
WE DEMANDED A REFUND, BUT KAMIOKA-SAN REFUSED...
INSTEAD HE OFFERED US A SUPER-DISCOUNTED TOUR IN APOLOGY.
WE WERE SUSPICIOUS AT FIRST, BUT...

EVEN THOUGH WE TRANSFERRED THE PAYMENT TO THEM, SPIN TRAVEL DIDN'T SEND US THE TICKETS.
BUT WE NEVER GOT TO GO
YES.
YOU EVENTUALLY APPLIED?
KYOUKO-SENPAI AND HER FRIENDS WENT TO THE TRAVEL AGENCY ONCE AGAIN... BUT THEN—
THE PROBLEM IS WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT, KUROSAKI-SAN!!
IT'S A COMMON TRAP.
THAT'S RIGHT... BUT APPARENTLY THAT COMPANY HAS BEEN THERE FOR 5 YEARS
YOU MEAN ANOTHER COMPANY WAS IN THEIR PLACE...?
IT'S ALL SO CONFUSING...
WAS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND!!
THE TRAVEL AGENCY IN THE BUILDING WE WENT TO A MONTH AGO

DID YOU GO TO THE FLOOR OF THEIR AGENCY BY THE STAIRS?
OR WAS IT BY ELEVATOR?
ONE QUES-TION
IT REALLY IS A MYSTERY —MAYBE THEY WERE SPIRITED AWAY??
SO DID YOU GO THERE BY YOUR-SELVES?
HUH
WE USED THE ELEVATOR IT WAS ON THE 10TH FLOOR.
WHO PRESSED THE BUTTON WHEN YOU BOARDED THE ELEVATOR?
THE PERSON WHO CAME FOR US.
WAS THERE A SIGN IN THE ELEVATOR SHOWING THE CURRENT FLOOR?
OUR AGENCY IS ON THE 10TH FLOOR, BUT I'LL GUIDE YOU THERE MYSELF SO COULD YOU PLEASE WAIT FOR ME AT THE LOBBY ON THE 1ST FLOOR.
NO. WHEN WE FIRST CONTACTED THEM, WE WERE TOLD BY THE MAN ON THE PHONE

...IN OTHER WORDS
KUROSAKI-SAN, WHAT ARE YOU HINTING AT?
...I DON'T REMEMBER.
THE SHIROSAGI'S OFFICE ON THE 10TH FLOOR YOU WERE BROUGHT TO
WASN'T REALLY ON THE 10TH FLOOR.
B-BUT ...
IT'S QUITE NATURAL TO LOSE TRACK OF THE FLOOR YOU'RE ON WHEN WALKING AROUND A BUILDING ISN'T IT?
THE HALLWAYS OF BUILDINGS LOOK SIMILAR AT A GLANCE WHETHER IT'S THE 10TH OR 13TH FLOOR
WHAT?!

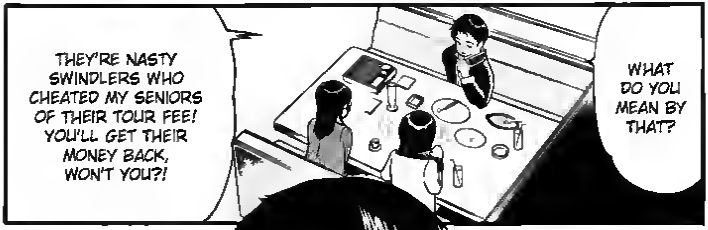

THE ONE WHO PUSHED THE BUTTON WAS THE SHIROSAGI'S ACCOMPLICE
AND YOU DIDN'T TAKE NOTICE OF THE CURRENT FLOOR ON THE SIGN.
EVEN IF THAT WERE SO, I'M SURE WE'D HAVE NOTICED..!!
EVEN IF IT'S A BUILDING WITH A FLOOR SIGN IN THE HALLWAY, ALL THEY NEED TO DO IS TEMPORARILY COVER IT UP.
ALL THE SHIROSAGI NEEDS TO DO IS PLACE HIMSELF IN FRONT OF THE BUTTON, AND COVER IT FROM YOU WITH HIS BODY...
—WHICH GOES WITHOUT SAYING NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU SEARCH THE 10TH FLOOR, YOU'LL NEVER FIND THEM SINCE THEY'RE ON THE 13TH FLOOR
WITH THAT PRECAUTION, EVEN IF ANY OF YOU VICTIMS TRY TO COME AND YELL AT THEM, YOU'D NEVER FIND THEIR OFFICE
THAT'S HOW THEY'D TAKE YOU TO AN OFFICE ON THE 13TH FLOOR SAYING "THIS IS THE 10TH FLOOR"..

NORMALLY, MOST ELEVATORS HAVE A SIGN OVER THE DOOR SHOWING THE CURRENT FLOOR.
N-NO WAY...
EVEN IF THE POLICE ARE CONVINCED BY YOUR STORY AND DECIDE TO CARRY OUT A HOUSE SEARCH, THEY CAN'T MAKE A RAID IF IT'S ON A DIFFERENT FLOOR.
AND BY CHANGING THE LOOK OF THE ENTRANCE OF THEIR ACTUAL OFFICE SLIGHTLY, THEY'D BE ABLE TO STAY UNDER COVER FOR SOME TIME...
DO YOU REMEMBER IF THERE WAS ANYTHING COVERING IT?
MAYBE A SLOGAN OR A NOTICE SIGN
THERE WAS ONE...
THE ELEVATOR IS A PUBLIC SPACE PLEASE KEEP IT CLEAN
A NOTICE SIGN SAYING "PLEASE KEEP THE ELEVATOR CLEAN".

S2S

SO, KUROSAKI-SAN
WHAT'S NEXT?!

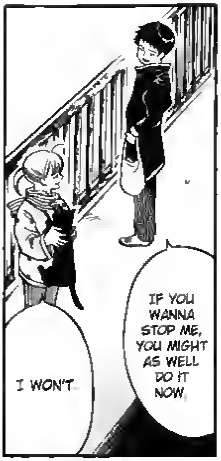
ヤチャ

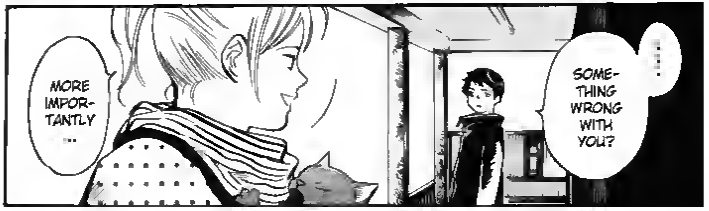

THEY'RE NASTY SWINDLERS WHO CHEATED MY SENIORS OF THEIR TOUR FEE! YOU'LL GET THEIR MONEY BACK, WON'T YOU?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

IT TAKES A LOT OF MONEY. FOR ALL SORTS OF THINGS.
LOOK HERE, YOUNG LADY. IT ISN'T EASY TO FIND A SHIROSAGI.
.....

SEE, SENPAI I TOLD YOU HE'S RELIABLE.
.....
OF COURSE IF I FIND KAMIOKA, I'LL DO IT— BUT DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP
IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE ANY OBLIGATION TOWARDS YOU
STILL FEEDING HIM LAVISH MEALS, I SEE
I HEAR YUKARI WENT TO SEE YOU TODAY

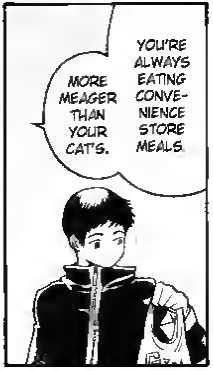
IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN DO ANYTHING, ANYWAY.


I WON'T.
IF YOU WANNA STOP ME, YOU MIGHT AS WELL DO IT NOW.


MORE IMPOR-TANTLY ...
SOME-THING WRONG WITH YOU?

IT TAKES THE SAME EFFORT TO PREPARE A CAT'S MEAL AND A HUMAN'S MEAL
...HOW ABOUT IT?

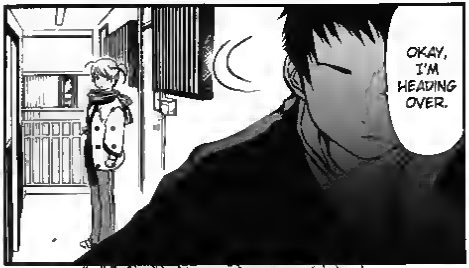
HEY, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S FEEDING MY CAT THESE LAVISH MEALS...
YEAH, SO...

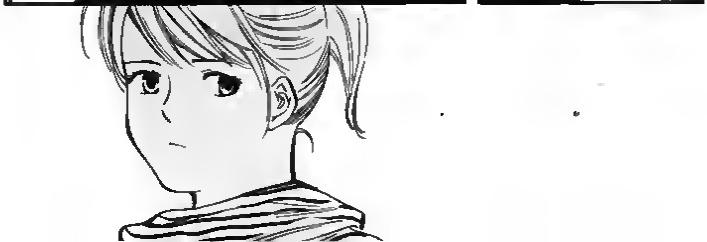

YOU'RE ALWAYS EATING CONVE-NIENCE STORE MEALS.
MORE MEAGER THAN YOUR CAT'S.

SO IF YOU DON'T MIND, I CAN COOK FOR—
Rrrring

—HELLO
YEAH

Rrrring

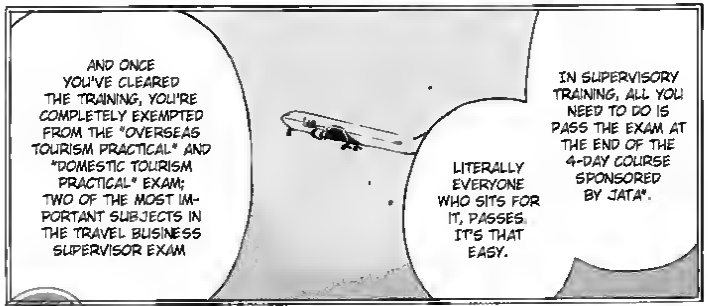

OKAY, I'M HEADING OVER.



SIGN: KATSURA

SUPERVISORY TRAINING...?
KAMIOKA UNDERWENT "SUPERVISORY TRAINING", SO HE HAD AN EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN SUBJECTS IN THE EXAM.
IS A QUALIFICATION YOU OBTAIN BY SITTING FOR AN EXAMINATION BY THE MLIT*

NOTE: *MINISTRY OF LAND, INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORT AND TOURISM


AND ONCE YOU'VE CLEARED THE TRAINING, YOU'RE COMPLETELY EXEMPTED FROM THE "OVERSEAS TOURISM PRACTICAL" AND "DOMESTIC TOURISM PRACTICAL" EXAM; TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SUBJECTS IN THE TRAVEL BUSINESS SUPERVISOR EXAM
LITERALLY EVERYONE WHO SITS FOR IT, PASSES. IT'S THAT EASY.
IN SUPERVISORY TRAINING, ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS PASS THE EXAM AT THE END OF THE 4-DAY COURSE SPONSORED BY JATA*.

NOTE: *JAPAN ASSOCIATION OF TRAVEL AGENTS.

IN ORDER TO QUALIFY FOR SUPERVISORY TRAINING, YOU NEED AT LEAST 5 YEARS OF WORK EXPERIENCE IN A DOMESTIC TRAVEL AGENCY, AS WELL AS 3 YEARS ABROAD
YOU STILL NEED SOME EXPERIENCE
IN OTHER WORDS, IT ISN'T HARD TO GET CERTIFICATION?
WELL, MAKING USE OF THESE CERTIFICATIONS IS A SHIROSAGI'S FORTE...
YOU'RE PRETTY HARSH TODAY
SEE, I HATE PEOPLE WHO CAN'T ENJOY THEMSELVES WITHOUT DEPENDING ON OTHERS
I DON'T SEE HOW YOU CAN CONSIDER SOMEONE A FRIEND IF IT REQUIRES YOU TO GO ON A TRIP TO MAKE FOND MEMORIES.
IN THE END, THEY WERE CHEATED TWICE BECAUSE OF SUCH INSINCERE "FRIENDSHIP."
PEOPLE WHO ARE TOO CONCERNED ABOUT SUPERFICIAL THINGS ARE EASY PREY FOR SHIROSAGI.
"STILL TAKING THE INFO FEE"... RIGHT?
DON'T WORRY, I'M ALL FOR IT.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THIS UP. IF YOU'RE NOT UP TO IT, YOU CAN JUST STOP.
BUT I'M—

AFTER ALL, IT'S THE SHIROSAGI I'M INTERESTED IN, NOT THE VICTIM.
AS WE SPEAK, THIS SHIROSAGI IS LURKING SOMEWHERE, READY TO POUNCE ON HIS NEXT VICTIM...

—THIS WAS DECIDED THE INSTANT HIS EXISTENCE IN THIS WORLD CAME TO MY ATTENTION
アクム
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I NEED TO DO.

Kurosagi (the black swindler)

Written by Takeshi Natsuhara, Illustrated by Kuromaru

KUROSAGI CHAPTER 56

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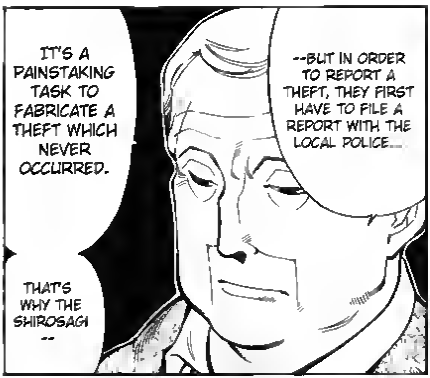
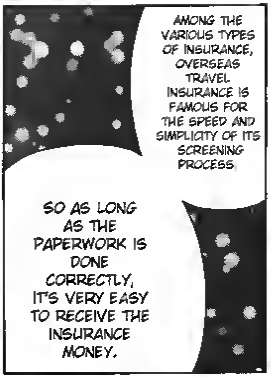
Plaasa support Takashi Natsuhara aod Kuromaru
by purchaslag this maaga whaa
it's availabla ia your cauotry.

CHAPTER 57 TRAVEL AGENCY FRAUD III

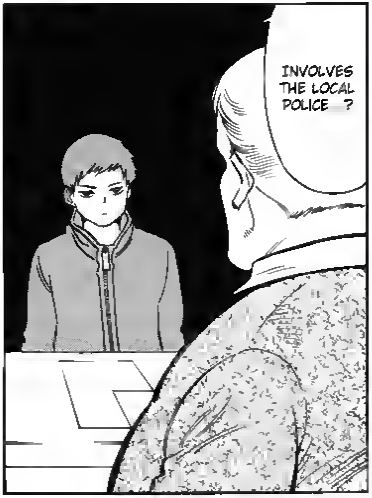
ジュウウウ
ジュワー
SNACK
KAMIOKA, HERE

WHAT KIND?
THIS TIME, HIS TARGET IS
INSURANCE AGENCIES
HAS BEEN EXCLUSIVELY TARGETING FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND OFFICE WORKERS TO CHEAT THEM OF THEIR TOUR FEES USING THE TOUR AGENCY HE OWNS
HOWEVER, AFRAID OF GETTING CAUGHT, HE'S BEEN BUSY WITH A NEW OPERATION AS OF LATE.
...SO HE'S TRYING TO CHEAT THEM OF OVERSEAS TRAVEL INSURANCE!
HE TAKES HEAVY DEBTORS, WHO CAN'T REFUSE, AS "CUSTOMERS" ON TRIPS TO PLACES SUCH AS SOUTHEAST ASIA
THEN FORCES THEM TO REPORT "WE WERE ROBBED" TO CLAIM INSURANCE FROM THE INSURANCE COMPANIES.


IT'S A PAINSTAKING TASK TO FABRICATE A THEFT WHICH NEVER OCCURRED.
--BUT IN ORDER TO REPORT A THEFT, THEY FIRST HAVE TO FILE A REPORT WITH THE LOCAL POLICE....
THAT'S WHY THE SHIROSAGI --


AMONG THE VARIOUS TYPES OF INSURANCE, OVERSEAS TRAVEL INSURANCE IS FAMOUS FOR THE SPEED AND SIMPLICITY OF ITS SCREENING PROCESS.
SO AS LONG AS THE PAPERWORK IS DONE CORRECTLY, IT'S VERY EASY TO RECEIVE THE INSURANCE MONEY.

HOT HOT.


INVOLVES THE LOCAL POLICE ?

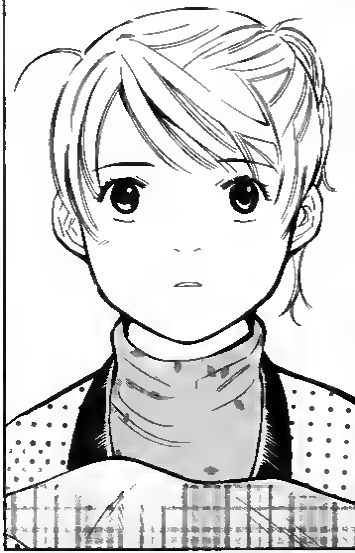
RIGHT.
THAT'S HOW HE STAGES A FAKE THEFT
HE PAYS THE OFFICER A BRIBE TO MAKE HIM PREPARE THE DOCUMENTS, RIGHT?

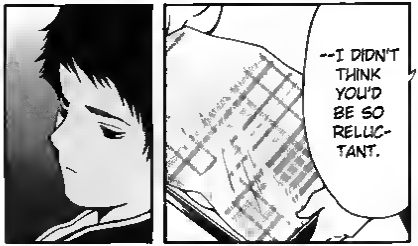
IF WE ESTIMATE THE STOLEN GOODS AT 500 THOUSAND TO 1 MILLION YEN A PERSON, WITH A 15-PERSON TOUR...
PAYING OFF A POLICE OFFICER IS EASIER THAN IT LOOKS
THE SUPPOSED STOLEN ARTICLE CAN BE SOMETHING BROUGHT FROM JAPAN, OR EVEN A SOUVENIR BOUGHT ON LOCATION. ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE--
YOU'LL PROBABLY NEED THIS NOW.
I'LL NEED SOME TIME TO THINK, SO I'LL CONTACT YOU LATER ABOUT THE THINGS I NEED YOU TO PREPARE.
I SEE.
IT'S CLEAR THAT KAMIOKA GETS A PRETTY HEFTY SUM.
THAT WAS FAST..
KAMIOKA'S PHONE NUMBER...
.....

WHAT IS IT?

WHAT'S UP WITH THIS?
YES..
I THINK YOU KNOW QUITE WELL.
WERE YOU THE ONE WHO LEFT THIS?
SEE, YOU'RE ALWAYS EATING ALL SORTS OF UNHEALTHY STUFF
SO I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD HAVE A PROPER MEAL ONCE IN A WHILE...
ANYWAY, THAT'S... A MEAL I MADE WHILE COOKING FOR THE CAT.
I SAID I DON'T NEED IT.
IF YOU WON'T TAKE IT THEN I'LL JUST HAVE TO THROW IT AWAY.
BUT IT'LL GO TO WASTE..
WELL, I DON'T NEED IT

YOU'VE BEEN ACTING WEIRD LATELY.
WHY ARE YOU DOING ALL THIS?




--I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE SO RELUC-TANT.

ANYWAY
I DON'T WANT TO BE TREATED LIKE THAT BY OTHER PEOPLE.

IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS
...
OH, YOSHI-KAWA?
SHIMIZU-KUN...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, NO CLASSES NOW?
THEY WERE CAN-CELLED
I SEE MINE WERE AS WELL.
.....
I KNOW! WHY DON'T WE GO SOMEWHERE TO EAT? IT'S LUNCH TIME, AFTER ALL.
LUCKY ...

Rrring
--YES, HELLO ?
HI, IS THIS KAMIOKA-SAN?
.. WHO'S THIS?
I HEARD YOU GUYS WERE LOOKING FOR HEAVY DEBTORS ON THE VERGE OF DEFAULT.
WE HAVE A FEW OF THOSE.
--AND WE'RE WILLING TO SELL THEM TO YOU IF YOU WANT.
ARE YOU A LOAN SHARK? WHO DID YOU GET THIS NUMBER FROM?
LET'S JUST SAY FROM A FRIEND IN THE BUSINESS.
HOW ABOUT IT? IT'S UP TO YOU.
I'LL SELL THEM TO SOMEONE ELSE IF YOU'RE NOT INTERESTED.

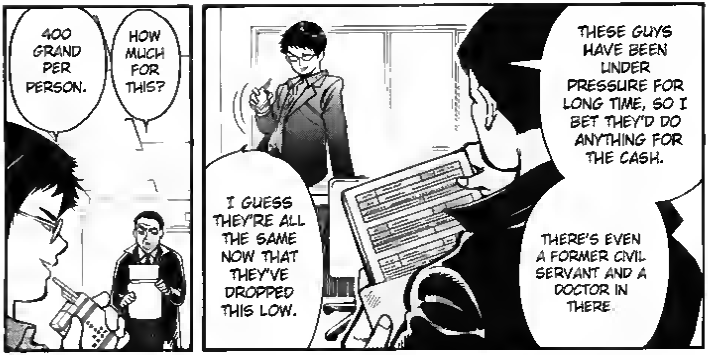
I'M NOT DEALING WITH SOMEONE WHO WON'T TELL ME HIS NAME.
SORRY, MY BAD.
I'M FROM KIRA KIRA LOAN.
THE NAME'S EZAKI.
I'VE STARTED LOOKING FOR A JOB, BUT YOU KNOW HOW HIGH THE COMPETITION RATE IN THE ARCHITECTURE INDUSTRY IS---
ALTHOUGH THERE ARE THOSE IN MY DEPARTMENT WHO DON'T MIND GETTING AN UNRELATED JOB, THE THING IS, I REALLY WANT TO WORK AT AN ARCHITECT OFFICE...
"IN THE FUTURE... I'LL DESIGN A NEW HOME FOR YOU." IS WHAT I PROMISED MY PARENTS WHEN THEY ALLOWED ME TO ENTER UNIVERSITY, SO I'VE GOT TO FIND A JOB OR THEY'LL KILL ME

WHAT'S WRONG? YOU WERE SPACING OUT.
S-SORRY
HUH.
YOSHIKAWA, ARE YOU LISTENING?
DON'T YOU HAVE A DREAM TO BE A PUBLIC PROSECUTOR?
YEAH, I DO
HOW YOU'RE SO LEVEL-HEADED, WITH A PROPER DREAM AND ALL.
OH, I WAS JUST THINKING OF HOW LUCKY YOU ARE, SHIMIZU-KUN
YEAH!
SAY, SHIMIZU-KUN
.....
WHAT IS IT, YOSHIKAWA?
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CAREER, YOU CAN TALK TO ME!

DO YOU THINK IT'S POSSIBLE TO INSTILL STUFF LIKE DREAMS AND HAPPY THOUGHTS
IN SOMEONE WHO'S LIVING THEIR LIFE WITHOUT ALL THAT?
.....
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
HE TOLD ME ON THE PHONE THAT IT'S ONE OF THESE BUILDINGS
WHICH BUIL-DING?
West Shinjuku

HERE IT IS, KAMIOKA-SAN
ON THE 8TH FLOOR
Uni Design Inc
8 F Kira Kira Loan Co Ltd
Kuromaru Office
THE WEST ANNEX OF THE MINATOYAMA BUILDING
YEAH, IT'S SURROUNDED BY MULTI-TENANT BUILDINGS.
IT'S IN QUITE AN OBSCURE LOCATION.
SORRY ABOUT THE CALL. I'M EZAKI.
KAMIOKA
HEYA
KAMIOKA-SAN!

YOU SHOULDN'T JUDGE PEOPLE BY THEIR APPEAR-ANCE.
.....
THAT FACE
I BET YOU'RE THINKING "HE'S YOUNGER THAN I THOUGHT."
HE'S YOUNGER THAN I THOUGHT. MAYBE HE'S A MANAGER ON PAYROLL...
--NO ONE ELSE IS AROUND
WE'RE ACTUALLY CLOSED TODAY. I MADE AN EXCEPTION JUST FOR YOU.
THIS IS THE LIST FOR SALE.
WANT TO TAKE A LOOK?
YEAH.
THE DETAILS OF 30 PERSONS IN ALL.


400 GRAND PER PERSON.
HOW MUCH FOR THIS?
I GUESS THEY'RE ALL THE SAME NOW THAT THEY'VE DROPPED THIS LOW.
THESE GUYS HAVE BEEN UNDER PRESSURE FOR LONG TIME, SO I BET THEY'D DO ANYTHING FOR THE CASH.
THERE'S EVEN A FORMER CIVIL SERVANT AND A DOCTOR IN THERE

YOU'RE GONNA USE THEM TO MAKE A LOT OF MONEY, AREN'T YOU?
THAT'S TOO EXPENSIVE!

THAT MAKES 12 MILLION YEN FOR 30 RECORDS, BUT I'LL LET YOU HAVE IT FOR A ROUND NUMBER OF 10 MILLION.
.....
I'M SELLING THEM TO YOU FOR 400 GRAND EACH. A PRETTY GOOD BARGAIN IF YOU ASK ME
LISTEN UP. EVEN THOUGH I'M A LOAN SHARK, I'M NO COLD-BLOODED DEMON
THE PUBLIC HAS BEEN PRETTY OUTSPOKEN, SO WE HAVEN'T DONE IT LATELY. BUT IF WE RUFFLE THESE GUYS UP A BIT IT'S POSSIBLE TO COLLECT A MILLION FROM EACH OF THEM.

THANKS
OKAY, DEAL
30 RECORDS AT 10 MILLION YEN
I'M HAPPY WE COULD REACH AN AGREEMENT
YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND REMOVE THEIR ORGANS OR USE THEM FOR SMUGGLING FOR ALL I CARE
IF HE'S NOT A DEMON. .
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN. AFTER SUCKING HIS CLIENTS DRY, HE SELLS THEM OFF WHEN HE'S DONE WITH THEM
THAT LOAN SHARK. . ALTHOUGH HE CLAIMED HE WASN'T A DEMON, HE SOUNDED A LOT LIKE ONE TO ME.
. . . . . .

THEN GUYS LIKE US WHO SEND THESE HEAVY DEBTORS ON A NICE TRIP
AND ONLY PREY ON INSURANCE COMPANIES..
MUST BE ANGELS.

Kurosagi (the black swindler)

Written by Takeshi Natsuhara, Illustrated by Kuromaru

KUROSAGI CHAPTER 57

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We Are recruiting ~

JOIN OUR SHOUNEN/SEINEN TEAM

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TRANSLATOR, REDRAWER AND A TYPESETTER FOR
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A TYPESETTER FOR JOUJUU SENJIN!! MUSHIBUGYO.

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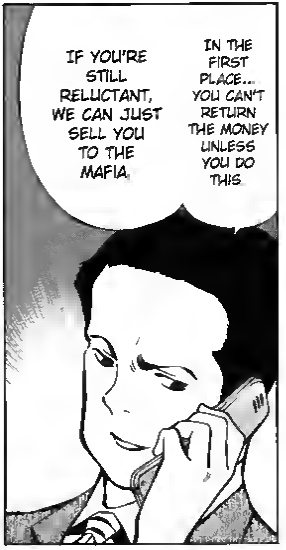
KIMI NI TODOKE, SKIP BEAT!, DENGEKI DAISY, SAIUNKOKU MONOGATARI,
HEY SAY JUMP.

SPIN TRAVEL CO. LTD.
IF YOU REFUSE, WE'LL CHASE YOU DOWN TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.
HEY, LISTEN UP. WE'RE THE ONES IN CHARGE OF YOUR BONDS NOW.

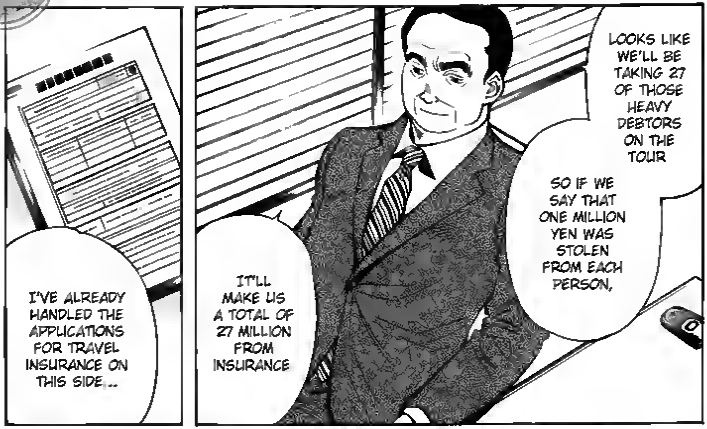
WE'LL GET ONE FOR YOU IF YOU CAN'T.
IT'S OKAY IF YOU FORGET TO BRING ANY LUGGAGE. JUST REMEMBER TO GET YOUR PASSPORT MADE.
THAT'S RIGHT. I HOPE WE'RE CLEAR NOW. THE FLIGHT 10 DAYS FROM NOW DEPARTS AT 2 P.M., SO BE AT NARITA BY 11 A.M.



CHAPTER 58 TRAVEL AGENCY FRAUD IV

3 OF THEM DIDN'T PICK UP THE PHONE NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I TRIED, BUT I'VE MANAGED TO REACH 90% OF THEM.
GREAT.
THAT'LL MAKE A REASONABLE SUM.
CHAPTER 58 TRAVEL AGENCY FRAUD IV

OKAY THEN, I'M OFF
I'M COUNTING ON YOU.


I'VE ALREADY HANDLED THE APPLICATIONS FOR TRAVEL INSURANCE ON THIS SIDE...
IT'LL MAKE US A TOTAL OF 27 MILLION FROM INSURANCE
SO IF WE SAY THAT ONE MILLION YEN WAS STOLEN FROM EACH PERSON,
LOOKS LIKE WE'LL BE TAKING 27 OF THOSE HEAVY DEBTORS ON THE TOUR

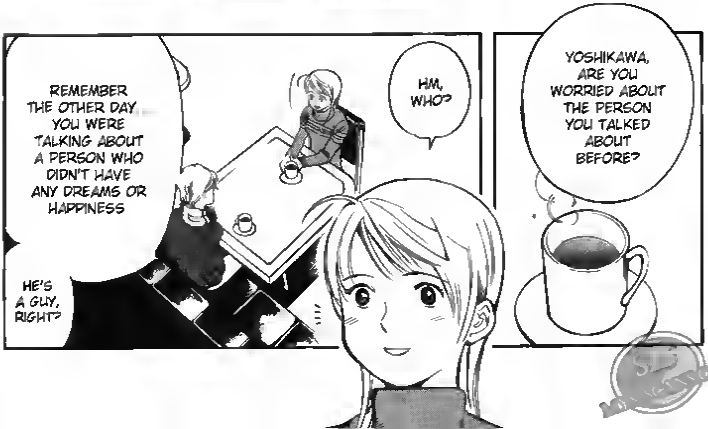
THAT KID EZAKI FROM THE LOAN SHARK'S OFFICE SOLD US SOME SOLID STUFF.
THIS LIST OF HEAVY DEBTORS ...IT COST US 10 MILLION TO GET, WHICH IS PRETTY CHEAP CONSIDERING THAT WE'LL MAKE 27 MILLION FROM IT.

KAMIOKA-SAN! I'M HERE IN NARITA NOW.
BUT SOME-THING'S NOT RIGHT!
OH, IT'S YOU. WHAT'S UP?
Brrrrr

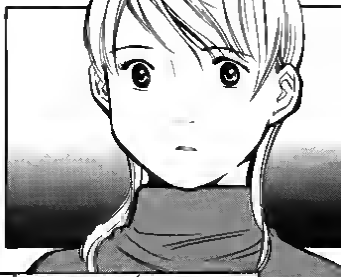
NONE OF THEM HAVE SHOWED UP
EVEN THOUGH THE CHECK-IN STARTED A LONG TIME AGO!!
WHAT DID YOU SAY?! MAYBE THEY DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE?
I MADE SURE TO INFORM THE GATE NUMBER BY PHONE, AND I'M EVEN HOLDING THE TOUR FLAG NOW..
.. HAVE YOU TRIED CONTACTING THEM?
YES... BUT NONE OF THEM ANSWERED
IT WAS FINE WHEN I CONTACTED THEM BEFORE
WHAT DO WE DO, KAMIOKA-SAN...
THE PLANE WILL LEAVE ANY MINUTE NOW.
...
3
GATE

WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING...?

Beep


REMEMBER THE OTHER DAY YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT A PERSON WHO DIDN'T HAVE ANY DREAMS OR HAPPINESS
HE'S A GUY, RIGHT?
HM, WHO?
YOSHIKAWA, ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT THE PERSON YOU TALKED ABOUT BEFORE?

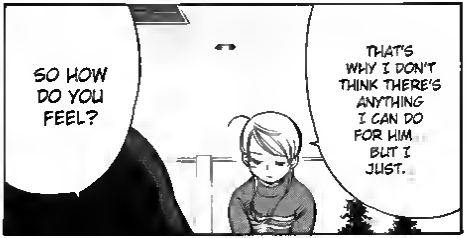
OH THAT... YOU SEE, HE'S A STRANGE PERSON..
ALTHOUGH HE'S ABOUT THE SAME AGE AS US
...HOW SHOULD I PUT IT

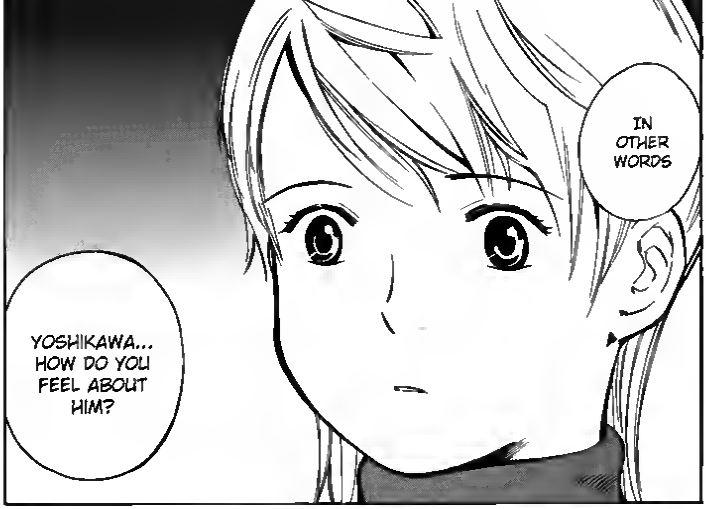


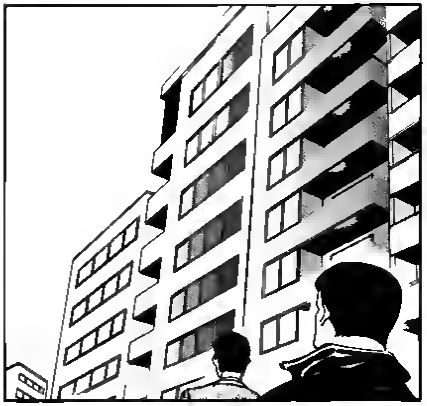
OF COURSE, I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT ANYTHING SPECIAL... JUST THINGS SUCH AS EATING TASTY FOOD, SLEEPING IN A COMFORTABLE BED, AND GOING OUT WITH FRIENDS...
—HE DOESN'T EVEN DESIRE ANY OF THOSE THINGS, EITHER.
.....

HE'S A PERSON WHO
DOESN'T HAVE ANY WILL TO STRIVE FOR HAPPINESS

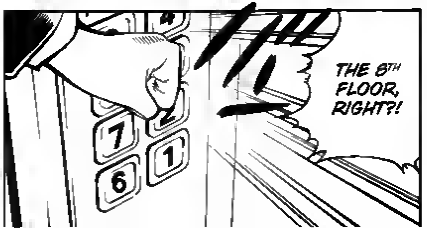
HUH?
THAT GUY I KNOW HE'S ON YOUR MIND...


SO HOW DO YOU FEEL?
THAT'S WHY I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR HIM... BUT I JUST.


YOSHIKAWA... HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HIM?
IN OTHER WORDS



WEST SHIN-JUKU
I'M SURE IT WAS SOMEWHERE HERE
AH, ISN'T THAT THE ONE?


THE 8TH FLOOR, RIGHT?!
7
6
1

HEY, EZAKI!!!
WHERE'S YOUR MANAGER, EZAKI?! HE SOLD US A PHONY LIST!!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!
THIS ISN'T THE LOAN SHARK'S OFFICE!
WHAT IS IT!!
KA-KAMIOKA-SAN!!
DON'T PLAY DUMB WITH ME!
MAYBE YOU'VE MADE A MISTAKE?
I'M THE PRESIDENT HERE—

9F UNI DESIGN INC.
8F TWILIGHT AGENCY
7F KUROMARU OFFICE
HUH?
YOU'RE RIGHT IT ISN'T KIRA KIRA LOAN...
DID WE GET IT CONFUSED WITH ANOTHER BUILDING?
WHY IS THIS PLACE FILLED WITH BUILDINGS WHICH LOOK ALIKE?!
KAMI-OKA-SAN!
I'VE CHECKED ALL THE BUILDINGS IN THE AREA, BUT KIRA KIRA LOAN IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
WHAT'S MORE...

IT EVEN FELT AS IF THEY WERE THERE FOR A LONG TIME...!
IMPOSSIBLE! THEY WERE OPERATING WITH A SIGNBOARD!

NO MATTER WHO I ASK
NOBODY HERE SEEMS TO HAVE EVEN SEEN KIRA KIRA LOAN...!!

COULD IT BE...!!
.....

MY TRAP COST A LOT MORE, THOUGH.
SO YOU GAVE THEM A TASTE OF THEIR OWN MEDICINE?

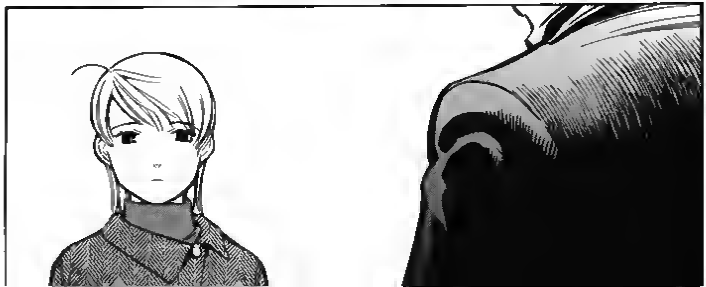
THOSE SHIRO-SAGI GUYS
ARE PROBABLY RUNNING AROUND THOSE BUILDINGS IN SEARCH OF KIRA KIRA LOAN.

SIGN: KATSURA
...IT REALLY SERVES THEM RIGHT
SNACK
桂

WELL, IT'S THE SORT OF BUILDING WHERE TENANTS WOULD RENT THEIR SPOT TO OTHERS, AND MONEY IS ALL IT TAKES TO RENT A PLACE.
THERE'S NO WAY THEY'D BE ABLE TO TRACE IT BACK TO ME IF THEY SEARCHED THE PAST RECORDS.
I NEEDED TO BRING IN A WHOLE SET OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT INTO THAT EMPTY ROOM,
AND I EVEN PAID PART-TIMERS TO ACT AS HEAVY DEBTORS ON THE PHONE.
OF COURSE, I'M NOT SATISFIED WITH JUST THAT...
THAT'S 'CUZ I MADE A PRETTY CLEAN JOB
YOU'RE QUITE TALK-ATIVE TODAY
IN OTHER WORDS, DISAPPEARING ISN'T THE SOLE PRIVILEGE OF A SHIROSAGI
S2S
—ALTHOUGH IT'LL BE HARD TO FIND ONE THAT'LL SATISFY ME.
I'LL BE WAITING FOR A MORE CHALLENGING TARGET.

Click
THAT GIRL..!

WHY DO YOU KEEP DOING THIS. GEEZ—
HEY, GIVE UP ALREADY.



BECAUSE I LIKE YOU.
WHA?
ALL I WANT—
I'M NOT HOPING FOR A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU OR ANYTHING.
BUT JUST BECAUSE I DO

AS LONG AS YOU REMEMBER THAT I CONFESSED TO YOU.
IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.
BYE.

集中講義
Gyaaa
I NEVER

THOUGHT I'D SEE SOMETHING LIKE THIS
FOR A SECOND TIME IN MY LIFE—

ドンヤッ

BUT THINGS LIKE THAT...

ARE OF NO USE TO ME.

Kurosagi (the black swindler)

Written by Takeshi Natsuhara, Illustrated by Kuromaru

KUROSAGI CHAPTER 58

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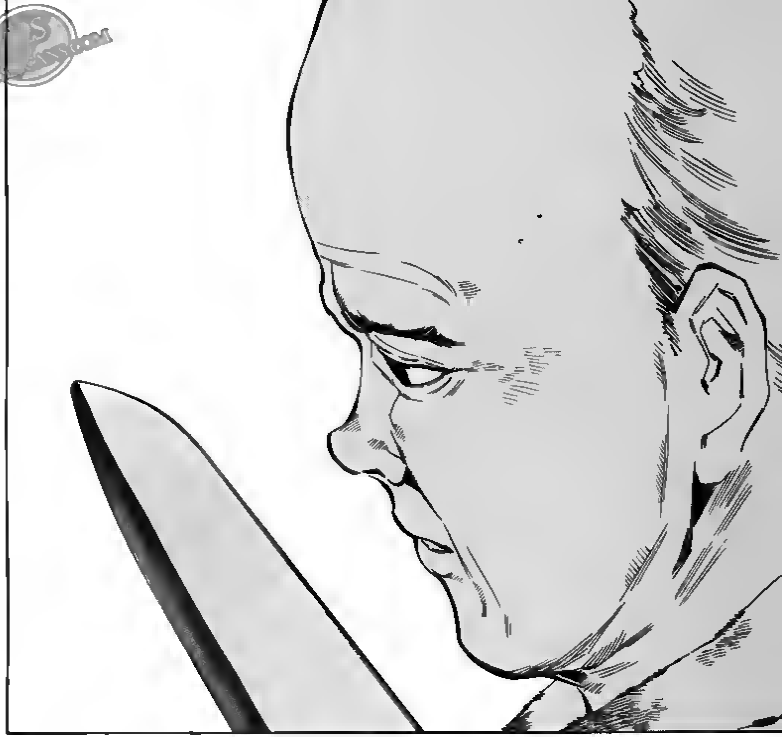
"FRANCHISE"

A BUSINESS MODEL IN WHICH THE FRANCHISOR FORMS AN AGREEMENT WITH THE FRANCHISEE TO PROVIDE THEM WITH EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO SALES AND SERVICES IN A CERTAIN AREA IN RETURN FOR A FIXED COMPENSATION.

THE FRANCHISOR GETS TO EXPAND ITS BUSINESS WITH VERY LITTLE CAPITAL, WHILE THE FRANCHISEE GETS TO OPEN UP A WIDELY KNOWN STORE WITHOUT ANY ACTUAL EXPERIENCE— THESE ARE THE RIGHTFUL MERITS OF BOTH SIDES.

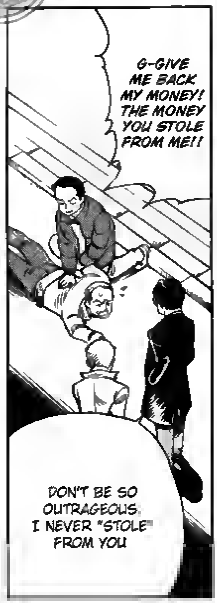
CHAPTER 59 FRANCHISE BUSINESS STARTUP FRAUD I



Uweeeen

KASU-
GAA!!
I...
I'LL KILL
YOU!!
HOW
DARE YOU
TRICK
ME...!!

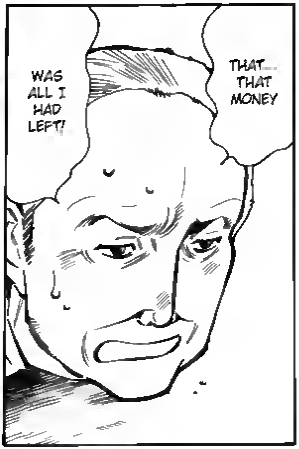
WHO DO WE HAVE HERE.....
—MY, MY.


G-GIVE ME BACK MY MONEY! THE MONEY YOU STOLE FROM ME!!
DON'T BE SO OUTRAGEOUS. I NEVER "STOLE" FROM YOU

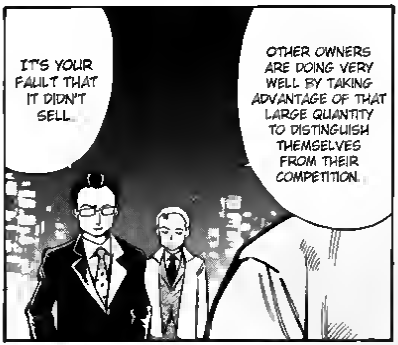
WHAT'S WITH THE COMMO-TION?
IF IT ISN'T MIZUNO-SAN.

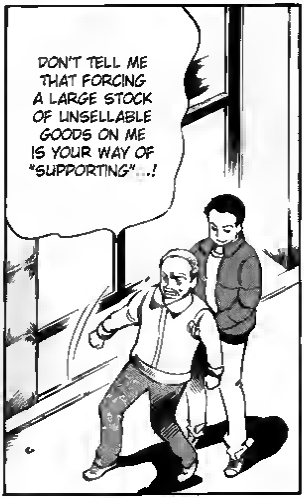
LOOK HERE, MIZUNO-SAN
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT YOUR FAILURE IN BUSINESS WAS ENTIRELY... YOUR OWN FAULT.

SIGH

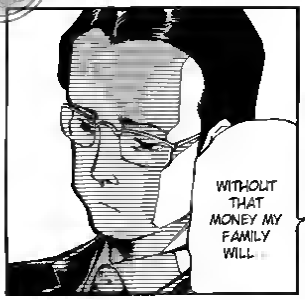

THAT... THAT MONEY
WAS ALL I HAD LEFT!

WE TRIED OUR BEST TO SUPPORT YOU...
HOWEVER, I'M SURE I TOLD YOU IN THE BEGINNING THAT A PENALTY ARISES IN THE CASE OF A FAILURE TO FULFILL THE TERMS OF CONTRACT.
IT'S WRITTEN CLEARLY ON THE CONTRACT YOU'VE SIGNED.

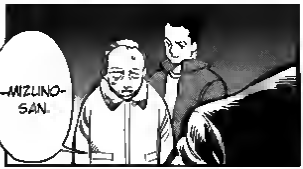

OTHER OWNERS ARE DOING VERY WELL BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THAT LARGE QUANTITY TO DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES FROM THEIR COMPETITION.
IT'S YOUR FAULT THAT IT DIDN'T SELL.


DON'T TELL ME THAT FORCING A LARGE STOCK OF UNSELLABLE GOODS ON ME IS YOUR WAY OF "SUPPORTING"...!

.....


WITHOUT THAT MONEY MY FAMILY WILL...

PLEASE, KASUGA-SAN...
AT LEAST... AT LEAST GIVE ME BACK THE INITIAL CONTRACT DEPOSIT

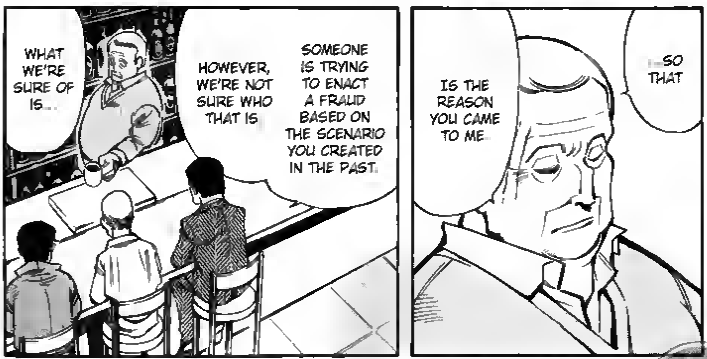

--MIZUNO-SAN.

IF YOU HAVE ANY OBJECTIONS YOU CAN SUE ME FOR ALL I CARE.
OR MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST CALL THE POLICE NOW?
I THINK YOUR FAMILY WILL BE IN EVEN MORE TROUBLE IF YOU'RE ARRESTED.

LET'S GO.
—THEY'RE PETTY OPERATIONS.
EVERY ONE OF THEM.
FOR EXAMPLE SMALL LOAN FRAUDS, RARE CONCERT-TICKET FRAUDS,
AND CHEATING MONEY BY SELLING NON-EXISTENT LARGE SCREEN TVS.
ALL AMATEUR STUFF.
……

APPARENTLY, THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF PEOPLE GETTING ARRESTED FOR SUCH TRIVIAL FRAUDS.
WHAT'S MORE, RUMOR HAS IT THAT...
THEY REALLY ARE ALL AMATEURS.
IN OTHER WORDS, WITH ALL THESE AMATEURS TRYING THEIR HAND AT THIS TRADE...
IT'LL MAKE OUR JOB HARDER?
WHAT...
HAS THAT GOT TO DO WITH ME?
YES, THAT'S ONE PROBLEM.
BUT WE BROUGHT THIS TO YOUR ATTENTION FOR A DIFFERENT REASON, KATSURAGI-SAN

MOST OF THESE PEOPLE
WERE APPARENTLY DRIVEN TO DESPERATION AFTER FALLING PREY TO A CERTAIN "LARGE-SCALE FRANCHISE FRAUD".


...SO THAT
IS THE REASON YOU CAME TO ME.
SOMEONE IS TRYING TO ENACT A FRAUD BASED ON THE SCENARIO YOU CREATED IN THE PAST.
HOWEVER, WE'RE NOT SURE WHO THAT IS.
WHAT WE'RE SURE OF IS...

THAT "SWINDLER" ISN'T DOING A GOOD JOB OF REENACTING YOUR SCENARIO, KATSURAGI-SAN.
YOUR METHOD WAS TO SQUEEZE EVERY LAST DROP FROM THE VICTIM WITHOUT RUINING HIM. THIS TIME, IT'S DIFFERENT.
IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S AN INFERIOR COPY.
THE ONES WHO ARE CARRYING OUT SMALL LOAN FRAUDS TO GAIN MONEY ARE ALL VICTIMS RUINED BY THAT PARTICULAR FRANCHISE FRAUD.
NATURALLY, THERE ARE ALSO THOSE WHO'VE RESULTED TO THEFT AND ARMED ROBBERY.
AND ATTEMPTED MURDER.
...CAN YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?
ON YOUR SIDE...
SORRY.
PLEASE!

KAGIKA
かぎづめ
I'M SURE YOU KNOW QUITE WELL
WHY I RETIRED FROM THIS TRADE.

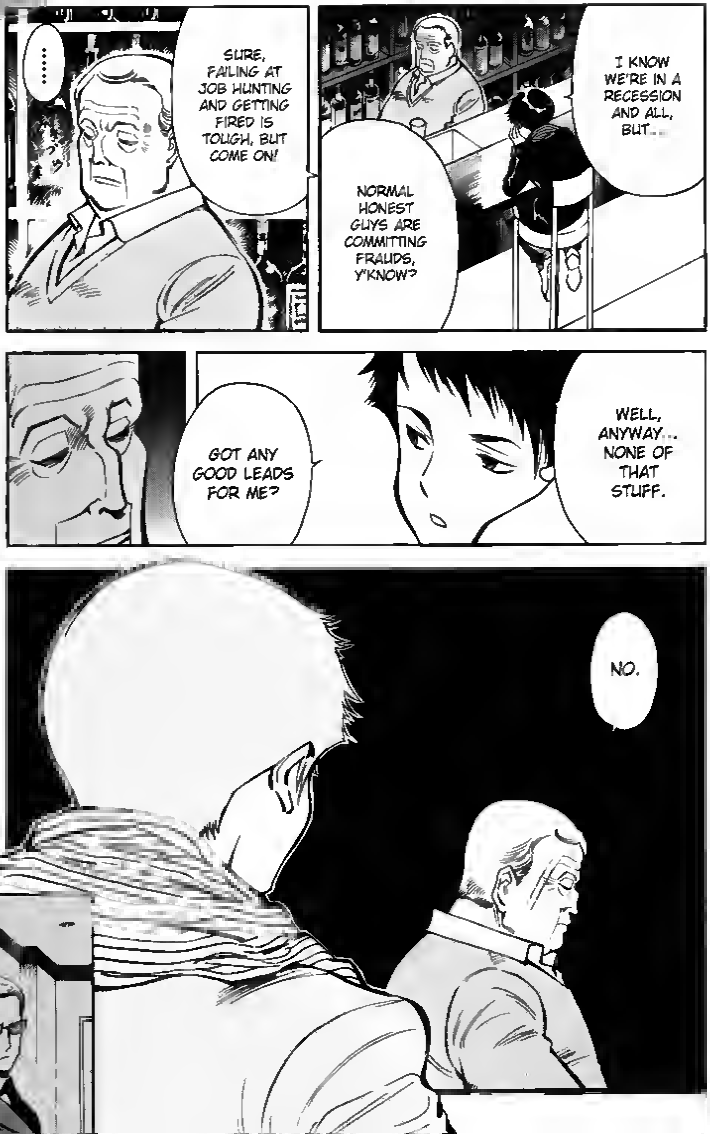
WHO'S BEHIND THIS FRANCHISE FRAUD...
THEN AT LEAST FIND OUT FOR US..

.....

SAJAK
SAJAK

Click
I KNOW I DON'T REMEMBER BEING CALLED, EITHER.
I DON'T REMEMBER CALLING YOU
:
SEX SLAM

.....
IT'S RARE FOR YOU TO GET A LOT OF CUSTOMERS.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE IN A GOOD MOOD.
I WAS FEELING A LITTLE DOWN...
—SO I DECIDED TO FIND SOME WORK.
HAVE YOU GOT A GOOD LEAD FOR ME? NOTHING POINTLESS, PLEASE.
POINT-LESS?
WELL, YEAH ... I HEARD THAT THERE HAVE BEEN MANY CASES OF WANNABE SWINDLERS GETTING CAUGHT LATELY.
I'M NOT INTERESTED IN ANY OF THOSE.


I KNOW WE'RE IN A RECESSION AND ALL, BUT...
NORMAL HONEST GUYS ARE COMMITTING FRAUDS, Y'KNOW?
SURE, FAILING AT JOB HUNTING AND GETTING FIRED IS TOUGH, BUT COME ON!
.....
WELL, ANYWAY... NONE OF THAT STUFF.
GOT ANY GOOD LEADS FOR ME?
NO.

WHY...
DON'T YOU USE HIM?
THEN GIVE ME A CALL WHEN YOU DO.
...I WON'T LET KURO DO IT
IF IT WERE THAT BIG A DEAL, IT'D BE THE POLICE'S JOB TO GET RID OF THE SHIROSAGI
TO GET RID OF THE FRANCHISE SHIROSAGI?
AREN'T YOU KEEPING HIM AROUND TO ELIMINATE THOSE WHO GO TOO FAR?
...

THEY WERE ALL SWINDLERS I'VE SEEN BEFORE.
ONE OF THEM WAS KOJIYAMA, A GUY WHO'S WORKED WITH THE OLD MAN A NUMBER OF TIMES BEFORE.
THE GUYS WHO CAME OUT OF THE STORE .
SOME-THING'S FISHY.
reel
ALL OF THEM SHUFFLED OUT OF THE STORE LOOKING DISAPPOINTED.
DID THEY FAIL AT REQUESTING A FAVOR FROM THE OLD MAN?
THE WAY HE SEEMED UNCON-CERNED
ABOUT THOSE AMATEUR SWINDLERS BUGS ME TOO ..

.....
MAYBE I SHOULD LOOK INTO IT.

Kurosagi (the black swindler)

Written by Takeshi Natsuhara, Illustrated by Kuromaru

KUROSAGI CHAPTER 59

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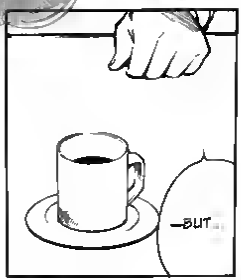
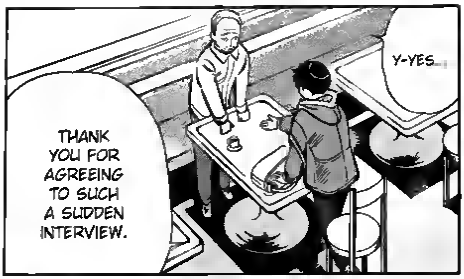
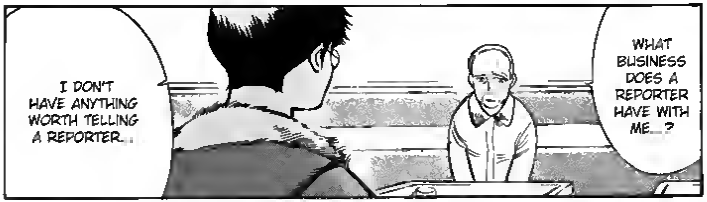
...THE OLD MAN'S ATTITUDE WAS A LITTLE STRANGE JUST NOW.
HE SEEMED ODDLY UNCONCERNED ABOUT THE AMATEUR SWINDLERS.
.....
MAYBE I SHOULD LOOK INTO IT.

CHAPTER 60 FRANCHISE BUSINESS STARTUP FRAUD II

Fumele
Fumele
POLE
CAFE
.....
HELLO THERE. SORRY FOR BEING LATE!
I BELIEVE WE TALKED ON THE PHONE. I'M KAWASAKI, FROM THE ASADOKU TIMES.
ARE YOU MIZUNO-SAN?


—BUT...

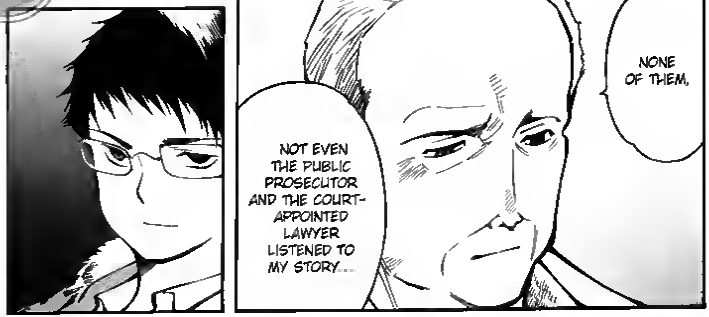

THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO SUCH A SUDDEN INTERVIEW.
Y-YES...

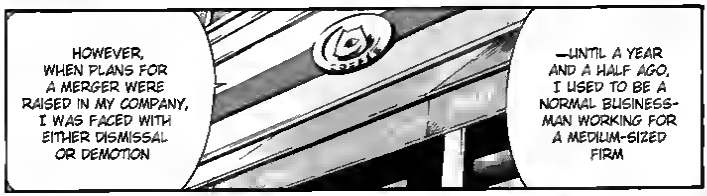

I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING WORTH TELLING A REPORTER...
WHAT BUSINESS DOES A REPORTER HAVE WITH ME...?

SFX SLAM
YOU'RE CURRENTLY UNDER PROBATION WITH A GUILTY VERDICT AFTER BEING ARRESTED FOR FRAUD LAST MONTH, RIGHT?
PARDON MY RUDENESS, BUT...

I'M NOT HERE TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE CRIME YOU COMMITTED.
WHAT I'M INTERESTED IN IS THE "BACKGROUND" THAT LED TO THE CRIME!
PLEASE, LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY
I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL YOU! THE TRIAL IS OVER!!
"BACK-GROUND" ...?
LATELY, THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF SIMILAR INCIDENTS OF PERFECTLY NORMAL PEOPLE, SUCH AS YOURSELF, COMMITTING CRIMES
...THE POLICE
"THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE EASILY STAINING THEIR HANDS WITH CRIME IS INCREASING"...
TOLD ME SOMETHING LIKE THAT AT MY TRIAL—
"EASILY", THEY SAY?!
THEY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I WENT THROUGH!

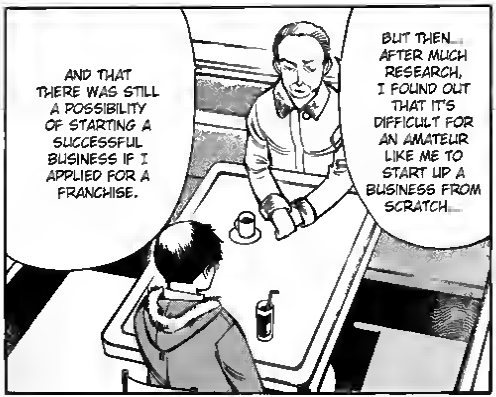
YOU SEE—
WHY ARE YOU SO INTERESTED IN IT?
—I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE EVENTS WHICH CAUSED YOU TO RESORT TO CRIME.
OF COURSE, I WON'T FORCE YOU.
WHILE I WAS RESEARCHING YOUR CASE,
I REALIZED THAT A NORMAL PERSON SUCH AS YOU, MIZUNO-SAN, WOULD NEVER COMMIT A CRIME WITHOUT A VALID REASON...
WHICH LED ME TO COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THERE MUST BE A GREATER "EVIL" LURKING BEHIND
HOW ABOUT IT, MIZUNO-SAN.
.....
HOWEVER, AS I SAID EARLIER, I WON'T FORCE YOU IF YOU'RE UNWILLING.
I'LL REWARD YOU WELL

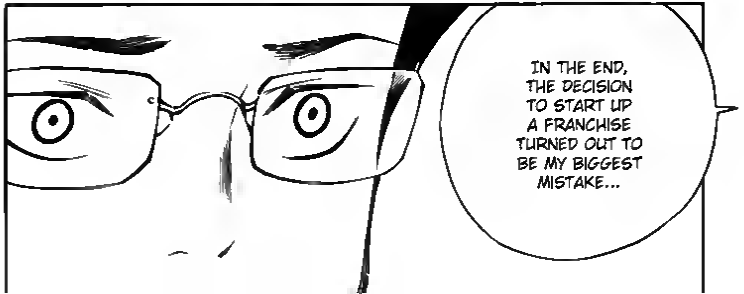

NONE OF THEM.
NOT EVEN THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR AND THE COURT-APPOINTED LAWYER LISTENED TO MY STORY...


—UNTIL A YEAR AND A HALF AGO, I USED TO BE A NORMAL BUSINESS-MAN WORKING FOR A MEDIUM-SIZED FIRM
HOWEVER, WHEN PLANS FOR A MERGER WERE RAISED IN MY COMPANY, I WAS FACED WITH EITHER DISMISSAL OR DEMOTION

AT THE TIME, MY TWO CHILDREN WERE STILL IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL... I COULDN'T AFFORD TO LOSE MY SOURCE OF INCOME.
THAT'S WHY I MADE THE CRUCIAL DECISION TO MAKE USE OF THE EARLY RETIREMENT SYSTEM, AND LEFT THE COMPANY.
DID YOU HAVE A PLACE IN MIND AFTER RETIRE-MENT?
EVEN IF I HAD STAYED ON WITH THE COMPANY, I PROBABLY WOULD HAVE ENDED UP IN THE SAME KIND OF PREDICAMENT.
BUT, IF...

IF I COULD SET UP MY OWN COMPANY OR STORE AND GAIN INCOME FROM THERE...
I'D BE ABLE TO KEEP WORKING WHILE I STILL HAVE THE ENERGY TO DO SO— IS WHAT I THOUGHT.


BUT THEN... AFTER MUCH RESEARCH, I FOUND OUT THAT IT'S DIFFICULT FOR AN AMATEUR LIKE ME TO START UP A BUSINESS FROM SCRATCH...
AND THAT THERE WAS STILL A POSSIBILITY OF STARTING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS IF I APPLIED FOR A FRANCHISE.

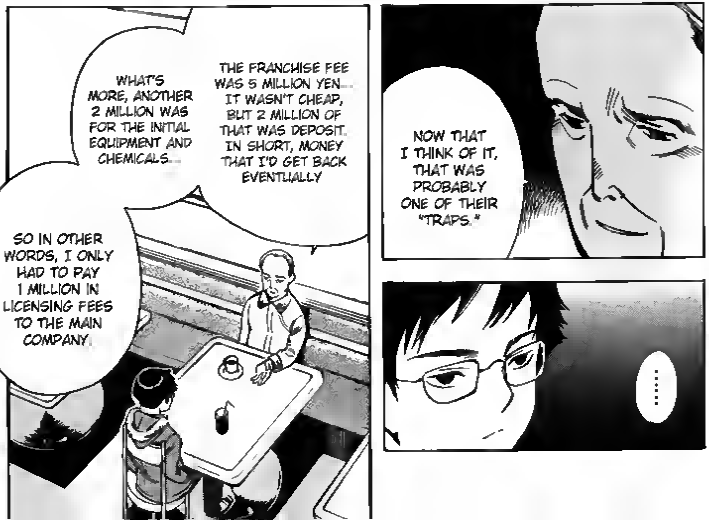

IN THE END, THE DECISION TO START UP A FRANCHISE TURNED OUT TO BE MY BIGGEST MISTAKE...

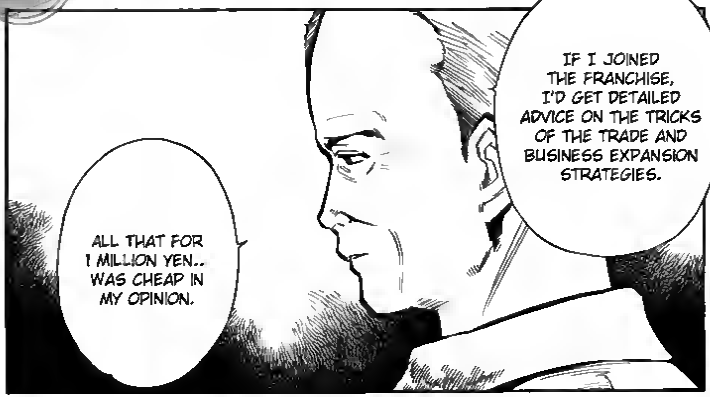
A FRANCHISE BUSINESS STARTUP FRAUD?
HUH.
KAWA-SAKI-SAN, WHY...
PLEASE TELL ME.

PLEASE TELL MORE ABOUT THAT FRANCHISE BUSINESS STARTUP...!
IN MUCH MORE DETAIL...
IT'S A HOUSEHOLD CLEANING FRANCHISE CHAIN.
ALTHOUGH THE HOUSE-CLEANING BUSINESS STILL HASN'T CAUGHT ON IN JAPAN, IT HAS A BIG MARKET IN AMERICA
THERE'S A COMPANY CALLED "LEGEND CLEAN"..

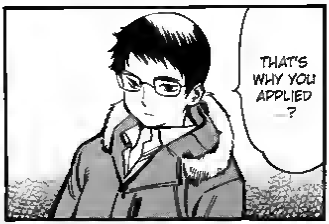
AMERICAN CLEANING COMPANIES ARE HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL, AND CARRY OUT INTENSIVE MAINTENANCE CHECKS USING THE LATEST HIGH-TECH EQUIPMENT.
"LEGEND CLEAN" IS THE FIRST CLEANING COMPANY IN JAPAN TO ADOPT THE AMERICAN STYLE— IS WHAT I WAS TOLD.

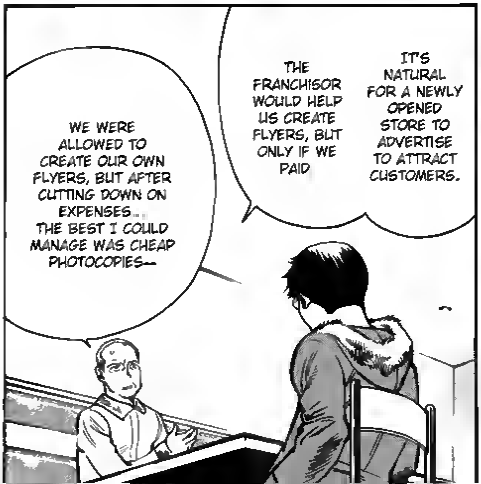
AFTER LOOKING AT THE PERFORMANCE NUMBERS OF THOSE AFFILIATED TO THE "LEGEND CLEAN" CHAIN, I SAW THAT MANY OF THEM WERE ABLE TO MAKE A PROFIT WITHIN SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS
THERE WERE EVEN THOSE WHO WERE ABLE TO START THEIR OWN BRANCH STORE WITHIN TWO YEARS.


NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, THAT WAS PROBABLY ONE OF THEIR "TRAPS."
.....
THE FRANCHISE FEE WAS 5 MILLION YEN... IT WASN'T CHEAP, BUT 2 MILLION OF THAT WAS DEPOSIT. IN SHORT, MONEY THAT I'D GET BACK EVENTUALLY
WHAT'S MORE, ANOTHER 2 MILLION WAS FOR THE INITIAL EQUIPMENT AND CHEMICALS...
SO IN OTHER WORDS, I ONLY HAD TO PAY 1 MILLION IN LICENSING FEES TO THE MAIN COMPANY.


IF I JOINED THE FRANCHISE, I'D GET DETAILED ADVICE ON THE TRICKS OF THE TRADE AND BUSINESS EXPANSION STRATEGIES.
ALL THAT FOR 1 MILLION YEN.. WAS CHEAP IN MY OPINION.

.....

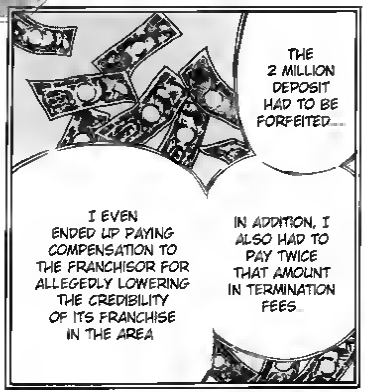

THAT'S WHY YOU APPLIED ...?

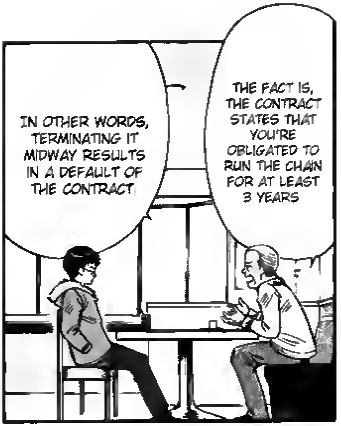

WE WERE ALLOWED TO CREATE OUR OWN FLYERS, BUT AFTER CUTTING DOWN ON EXPENSES.. THE BEST I COULD MANAGE WAS CHEAP PHOTOCOPIES—
THE FRANCHISOR WOULD HELP US CREATE FLYERS, BUT ONLY IF WE PAID
IT'S NATURAL FOR A NEWLY OPENED STORE TO ADVERTISE TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS.

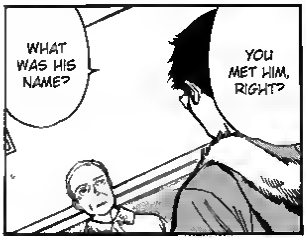
THE ADVERTISING COST WAS MORE THAN I EXPECTED.
THE FIRST SETBACK WAS THAT.
HOUSE CLEANING
LEGEND CLEAN

THE NEXT SETBACK WAS THE "CHEMICALS"
I ENDED UP CREATING A STAIN DURING THE CLEANING OF A HOUSE I WAS HIRED TO CLEAN...
CUSTOMERS TEND TO HAVE MORE TRUST IN A STORE WITH AN ATTRACTIVE, COLOR PRINTED FLYER
THE IMAGE OF A NEW STORE DEPENDS ON THE QUALITY OF THEIR FLYERS.
HOUSE CLEANING
LEGEND CLEAN
IN SHORT, THERE WERE CHEMICALS UNSUITABLE FOR JAPANESE HOMES.
I FOUND OUT LATER THAT THE CHEMICALS USED AT "LEGEND CLEAN" WERE JUST IMPORTS OF THOSE USED IN AMERICA...
YES
DUE TO THE NATURE OF THE CHEMICALS?
—BUT WHAT WAS MORE TAXING ON ME
THE PARENT COMPANY DIDN'T HELP ME OUT WITH PAYING COMPENSATION FOR THE STAINS, EITHER.
WHEN I DECIDED TO SEARCH FOR CHEMICALS SUITED TO JAPANESE HOMES TO USE,
I WAS TOLD THIS WAS A "BREACH OF CONTRACT."

WAS THAT THE USELESS CHEMICALS AND EQUIPMENT...
HAD TO BE BOUGHT EVERY MONTH AT A FIXED AMOUNT FROM THE FRANCHISER...!
EVEN THEN THE "PROJECTED SALES", OUTLINED TO ME IN THE BEGINNING, SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO COVER THOSE COSTS...
BESIDES THAT, I ALSO HAD TO PAY 500 THOUSAND IN MANAGEMENT FEES —OR "ROYALTIES"— EVERY MONTH...
HOW MUCH?
1 MILLION YEN WORTH.
I DID! BUT THAT WAS ALSO A "TRAP"!
YOU SHOULD HAVE TERMINATED THE CONTRACT.
I FEEL MISERABLE...
I REALLY DO!
BUT IN REALITY, THOSE SALES WERE NEVER REALIZED
.....

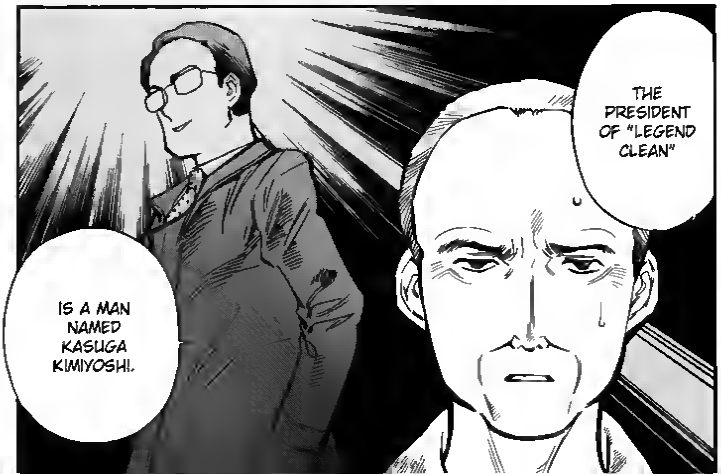

THE 2 MILLION DEPOSIT HAD TO BE FORFEITED...
IN ADDITION, I ALSO HAD TO PAY TWICE THAT AMOUNT IN TERMINATION FEES.
I EVEN ENDED UP PAYING COMPENSATION TO THE FRANCHISOR FOR ALLEGEDLY LOWERING THE CREDIBILITY OF ITS FRANCHISE IN THE AREA


THE FACT IS, THE CONTRACT STATES THAT YOU'RE OBLIGATED TO RUN THE CHAIN FOR AT LEAST 3 YEARS
IN OTHER WORDS, TERMINATING IT MIDWAY RESULTS IN A DEFAULT OF THE CONTRACT


WHAT WAS HIS NAME?
YOU MET HIM, RIGHT?

THAT DEMON.

THEY'RE DEMONS !!


THE PRESIDENT OF "LEGEND CLEAN"
IS A MAN NAMED KASUGA KIMIYOSHI.

I COULDN'T EVEN AFFORD TO PAY FOR MY CHILDREN'S SCHOOL MEALS, SO I BORROWED MONEY FROM MY FRIENDS BUT I COULDN'T PAY THEM BACK...
BY THE TIME I KNEW IT, I FOUND MYSELF CARRYING OUT FRAUDS...
.....
"KASUGA"
AL... I WANTED WAS ENOUGH INCOME TO SUPPORT MY FAMILY...
EVEN THEN,
WHY DID I END UP LIKE THIS...
WAS I DESERTED BY THAT FAMILY I SWORE TO PROTECT...?
TODAY...
I MET YOU,
.....
WHY...?

DAD.
THAT MAN DIDN'T KILL HIS FAMILY LIKE YOU DID—
SOMEONE WHO FELL VICTIM TO THE SAME FRAUD AS YOU
WELL, AT LEAST.
NOW I KNOW WHY THE OLD MAN DIDN'T SELL ME THIS INFORMATION.
HE WAS THE ONE WHO ORIGINALLY CREATED THIS FRAUD.
—WHICH MEANS I CAN'T RELY ON ANY INFORMATION FROM HIM THIS TIME ROUND
BUT...

"KASUGA,"
I HAVE A CLEAR VIEW OF YOUR BACK...
DON'T THINK YOU CAN ESCAPE FROM ME...!!

Kurosagi (the black swindler)

Written by Takeshi Natsuhara, Illustrated by Kuromaru

KUROSAGI CHAPTER 60

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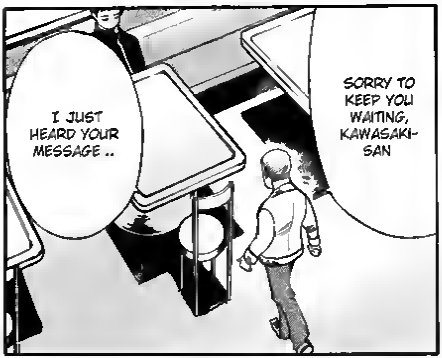


CHAPTER 61
FRANCHISE BUSINESS STARTUP FRAUD III

CHAPTER 61
FRANCHISE BUSINESS STARTUP FRAUD III

……

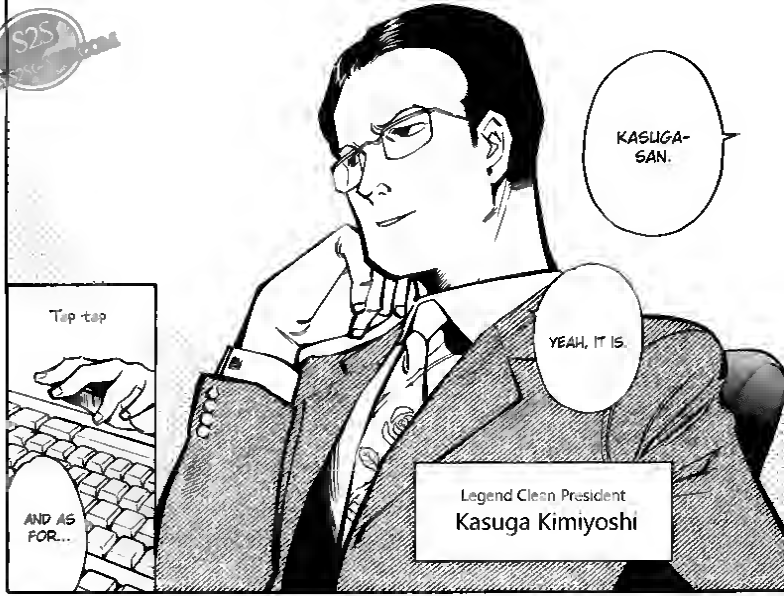
TODAY, YOU LOOK
QUITE DIFFERENT, KAWASAKI-SAN...
.....
MY REAL NAME...
IS KUROSAKI.
AND I'M NOT A NEWSPAPER REPORTER.
HUH?
B-BUT YOU SAID YOU WERE FROM ASADOKU...
--THAT WAS

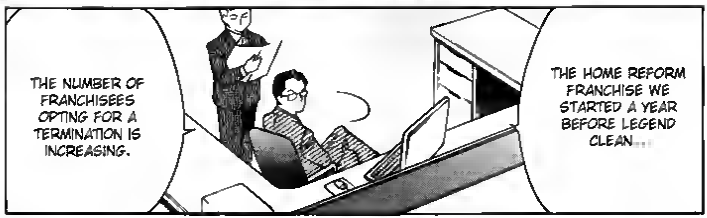
A COMMON METHOD I USE TO COLLECT INFORMATION.
.....
INFOR-MATION, YOU SAY...
MY REAL NAME IS KUROSAKI.
IF I HADN'T HEARD YOUR STORY ABOUT THE FRANCHISE,
I WOULD HAVE KEPT MY REAL NAME A SECRET, WITHOUT MEETING YOU A SECOND TIME.
I'M INTERESTED IN INFORMATION ABOUT THE FRANCHISE FRAUD YOU FELL VICTIM TO
THE ACTUAL CONTRACT PAPERS, THE ADDRESS OF LEGEND CLEAN'S OFFICE,
THE RINGLEADER'S NAME, AND EVEN DETAILS OF THOSE AROUND HIM.

DO YOU EXPECT ME TO AGREE JUST LIKE THAT AFTER BEING LIED TO?!
W-WAIT A MINUTE!
THE ONLY PERSON I CAN RELY ON FOR THAT INFORMATION IS YOU
SO PLEASE --
I THINK
AS LONG AS I GET THAT INFORMATION, I WON'T CONTACT YOU AGAIN
I'LL GIVE YOU ALL THE MONEY YOU WANT IN RETURN.
I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR ALL THIS TIME.
MIGHT BE CONNECTED TO SOMEONE
THAT MAN, KASUGA,

HEY, JUST NOW... YOU SAID IT WAS A FRANCHISE "FRAUD."
--ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE WHOLE LEGEND CLEAN GETUP WAS A SCAM?
SO THAT MEANS I WAS CHEATED BY THEM
AFTER ALL THAT I DO YOU EXPECT ME TO TRUST YOU?
.. YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRUST ME.
ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS SELL ME INFORMATION ON KASUGA.
WHA ...!
YOU NEED THE MONEY, RIGHT?
Rus-tle
MIZUNO-SAN
.....!?

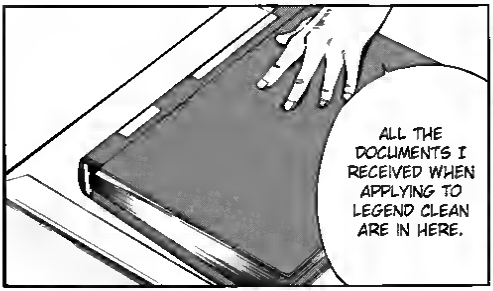
PLEASE!
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO BE DIPLOMATIC HERE...
RIGHT NOW
Legend Clean Head-quarters
THE NUMBER OF STORES WITH GROWING SALES IS SLOWLY INCREASING...
IT SEEMS LEGEND CLEAN IS DOING PRETTY WELL THIS TIME AROUND...


KASUGA-SAN.
YEAH, IT IS.
Tap tap
AND AS FOR...
Legend Clean President
Kasuga Kimiyoshi


THE NUMBER OF FRANCHISEES OPTING FOR A TERMINATION IS INCREASING.
THE HOME REFORM FRANCHISE WE STARTED A YEAR BEFORE LEGEND CLEAN...

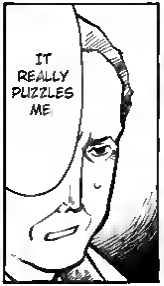
LET'S SETTLE IT...
HE SAID HE WANTS TO MEET THIS AFTER-NOON
KASUGA-SAN, THE BUYER JUST CALLED.
Rrrr-ing
TIME'S UP, I GUESS

I'LL MEET HIM.
ALL RIGHT.
PREPARE THE DOCUMENTS FOR THE HOME REFORM FRANCHISE.

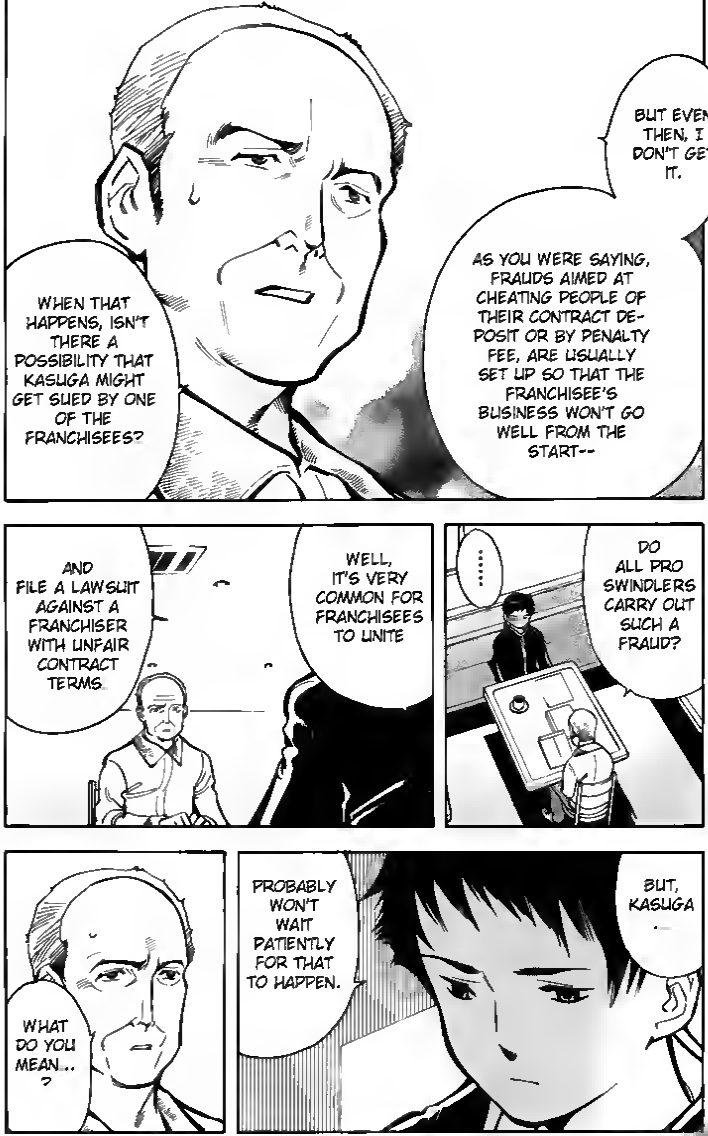

ALL THE DOCUMENTS I RECEIVED WHEN APPLYING TO LEGEND CLEAN ARE IN HERE.

Pole Cafe

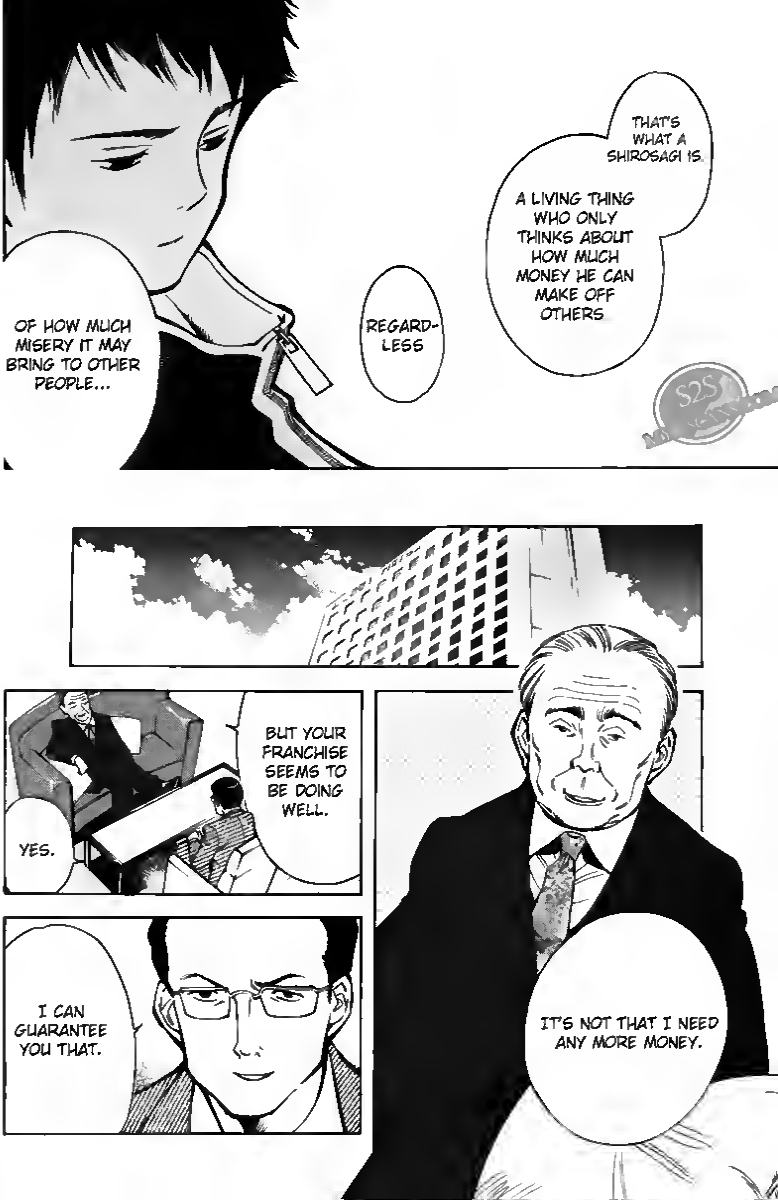
ACCORDING TO YOU, KASUGA IS A VETERAN PROFESSIONAL SWINDLER...
WHAT DOES?


IT REALLY PUZZLES ME.

SO THEY'RE IN SHINJUKU.


BUT EVEN THEN, I DON'T GET IT.
AS YOU WERE SAYING, FRAUDS AIMED AT CHEATING PEOPLE OF THEIR CONTRACT DEPOSIT OR BY PENALTY FEE, ARE USUALLY SET UP SO THAT THE FRANCHISEE'S BUSINESS WON'T GO WELL FROM THE START--
WHEN THAT HAPPENS, ISN'T THERE A POSSIBILITY THAT KASUGA MIGHT GET SUED BY ONE OF THE FRANCHISEES?
WELL, IT'S VERY COMMON FOR FRANCHISEES TO UNITE
AND FILE A LAWSUIT AGAINST A FRANCHISER WITH UNFAIR CONTRACT TERMS.
DO ALL PRO SWINDLERS CARRY OUT SUCH A FRAUD?
BUT, KASUGA...
PROBABLY WON'T WAIT PATIENTLY FOR THAT TO HAPPEN.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?

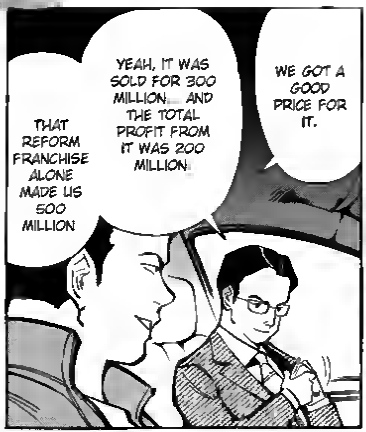
IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN THE FRANCHISEES' ANXIETY REACHES ITS PEAK AND THE FRANCHISE CHAIN IS ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE,
KASUGA SELLS THE FRANCHISE'S MANAGEMENT RIGHTS OFF TO SOMEONE ELSE.
WHA...?!
THAT WAY, EVEN IF THEY'RE SUED, THE FLAME WON'T REACH KASUGA, WHO'S NOT THE OWNER ANYMORE.
AND ONE MORE THING...
LEGEND CLEAN PROBABLY ISN'T THE ONLY FRANCHISE KASUGA IS MANAGING.
I'M QUITE SURE THAT HE'S RUNNING A NUMBER OF FRANCHISE CHAINS AT ONCE.
AT ONCE?
SEE, EVEN IF HE SELLS ONE OFF, HE STILL HAS OTHERS TO PUMP MONEY FROM. UNDERSTAND?

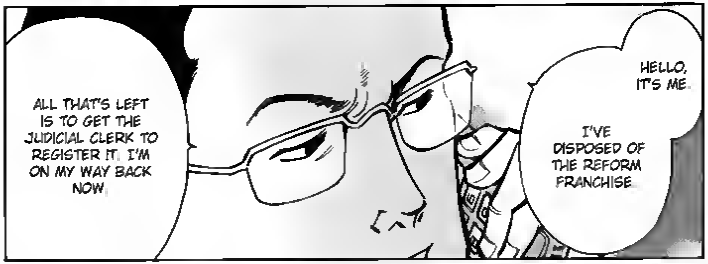

THAT'S WHAT A SHIROSAGI IS.
A LIVING THING WHO ONLY THINKS ABOUT HOW MUCH MONEY HE CAN MAKE OFF OTHERS
REGARD-LESS
OF HOW MUCH MISERY IT MAY BRING TO OTHER PEOPLE...
BUT YOUR FRANCHISE SEEMS TO BE DOING WELL.
YES.
IT'S NOT THAT I NEED ANY MORE MONEY.
I CAN GUARANTEE YOU THAT.

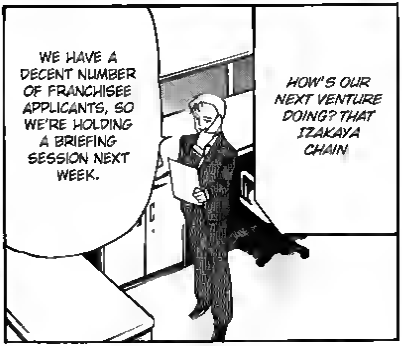
HOW ARE ITS MONTHLY PROFITS?
PLEASE HAVE A LOOK
INCLUDING THE AMOUNT FROM SUPPLIES SOLD TO THE FRANCHISEES, I CAN ASSURE 30 MILLION A MONTH
IN REALITY, IT COSTS US ALMOST NOTHING TO RUN...
SO ALL I NEED TO PREPARE IS A WAREHOUSE AND AN OFFICE BUILDING?
YES, WE'VE COMMISSIONED THE DELIVERY TO AN OUTSIDE COMPANY.
BUT, KASUGA-SAN AREN'T YOU THE ONE WHO NURTURED THIS HOME REFORM FRANCHISE TO ITS CURRENT SPLENDOR?
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY WITH LETTING GO OF IT SO EASILY?
YES YOU SEE, I HAVE OTHER BUSINESSES WHICH AREN'T DOING VERY WELL AT THE MOMENT

IT REALLY IS A PAIN TO START UP A COMPANY FROM SCRATCH.
WELL, FOR LAZY GUYS LIKE ME, IT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.
I SEE
I WANT TO FOCUS ON STRENGTHENING THE MANAGEMENT FOUNDATIONS THERE
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
ALL RIGHT, I'LL BUY.
Click

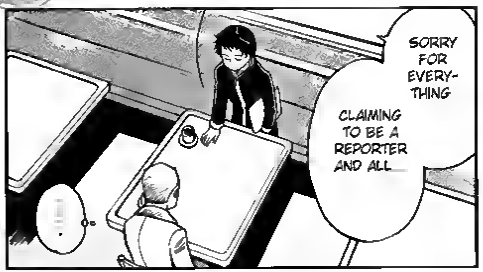
S2S Manga Room

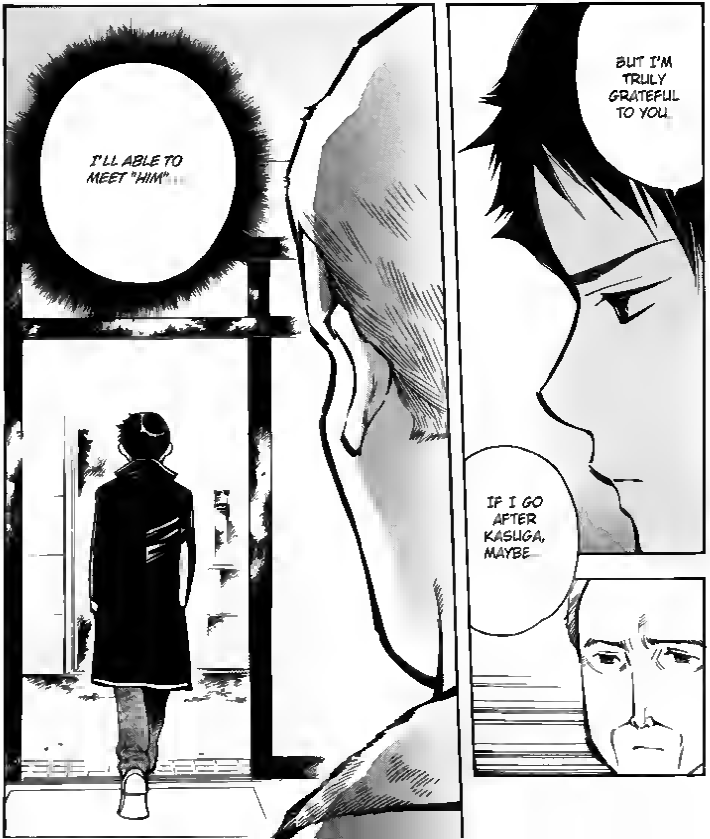

WE GOT A GOOD PRICE FOR IT.
YEAH, IT WAS SOLD FOR 300 MILLION... AND THE TOTAL PROFIT FROM IT WAS 200 MILLION.
THAT REFORM FRANCHISE ALONE MADE US 500 MILLION


HELLO, IT'S ME.
I'VE DISPOSED OF THE REFORM FRANCHISE.
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO GET THE JUDICIAL CLERK TO REGISTER IT. I'M ON MY WAY BACK NOW.


HOW'S OUR NEXT VENTURE DOING? THAT IZAKAYA CHAIN
WE HAVE A DECENT NUMBER OF FRANCHISEE APPLICANTS, SO WE'RE HOLDING A BRIEFING SESSION NEXT WEEK.

(TL NOTE: IZAKAYA = JAPANESE-STYLE BAR)


SORRY FOR EVERY-THING
CLAIMING TO BE A REPORTER AND ALL...
OKAY THEN, MIZUNO-SAN


I'LL ABLE TO MEET "HIM"...
BUT I'M TRULY GRATEFUL TO YOU.
IF I GO AFTER KASUGA, MAYBE...

HIS NAME IS MIZUNO YOSHIO, AGE 52
AS SUSPECTED, HE'S THE OWNER OF A SHOP AFFILIATED WITH THE CLEANING FRANCHISE CHAIN, "LEGEND CLEAN"
THE MAN KUROSAKI MET..
SNACK
IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT KUROSAKI IS AWARE OF KASUGA'S FRANCHISE FRAUD
.....
WE CAN DO THAT ANY TIME
WE SHOULD ACT NOW WHILE WE--
THERE COULD BE PROBLEMS IF HE MEETS KASUGA.

LET KURO DO AS HE PLEASES.

FOR NOW, THAT IS.

Kurosagi (the black swindler)

Written by Takeshi Natsuhara, Illustrated by Kuromaru

KUROSAGI CHAPTER 61

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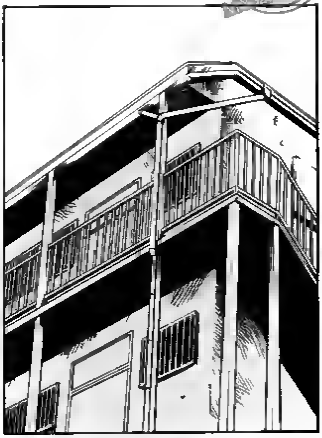
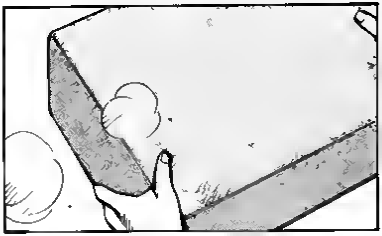
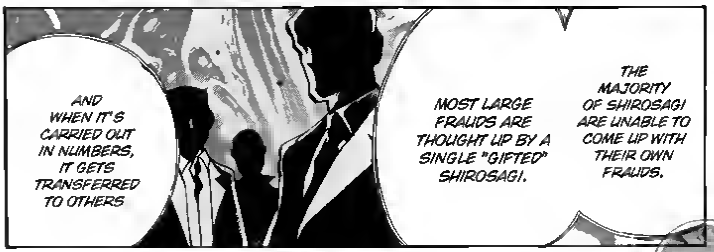
Fumble





FRANCHISE MODEL
CHAIN BUSINESS STARTUP FRAUD
3
Fran
Chain

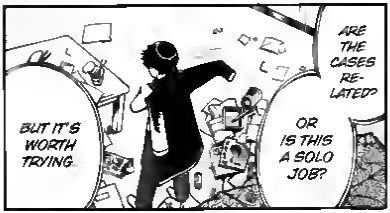
CHAPTER 60 FRANCHISE BUSINESS STARTUP FRAUD IV


THE MAJORITY OF SHIROSAGI ARE UNABLE TO COME UP WITH THEIR OWN FRAUDS.
MOST LARGE FRAUDS ARE THOUGHT UP BY A SINGLE "GIFTED" SHIROSAGI.
AND WHEN IT'S CARRIED OUT IN NUMBERS, IT GETS TRANSFERRED TO OTHERS

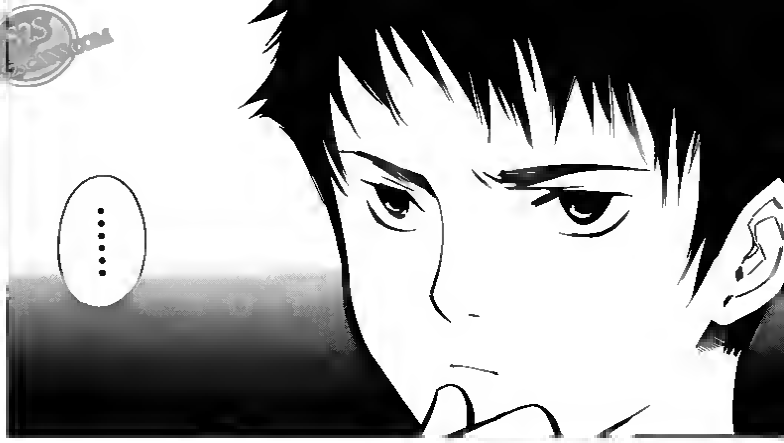
JUST HOW "THAT MAN"—
EVENTUALLY, NUMEROUS SHIROSAGI, WHO KNOW THAT FRAUD WELL, COME FROM WITHIN THAT ONE GROUP.
THE SHIROSAGI MIKIMOTO, WHO SWINDLED MY DAD,
WAS BORN FROM THE OLD MAN KATSURAGI'S GROUP!!
THE WEEKLIES ARTICLE FROM 2 YEARS AGO ..
LARGE FRANCHISE FRAUD
THE REALITY
IF HE WAS SOMEONE CLOSE TO THE OLD MAN OR MIKIMOTO—
Rustle
THIS SHIROSAGI, KASUGA, MUST HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE FRANCHISE FRAUD FROM SOMEONE.

Police questioned a man suspected to have connections to the fraud ring, suspect "K," as a prime witness in the case. However, there was insufficient evidence for arrest. Authorities are still questioning others involved in the case

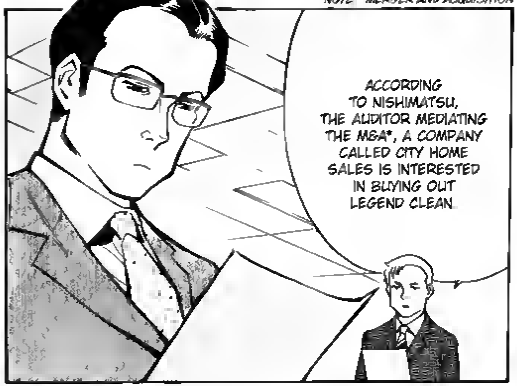
Very similar to the methods used in a previous large-scale franchise fraud.

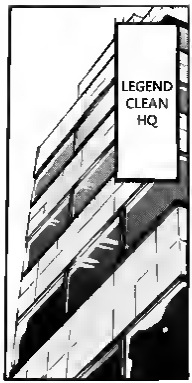


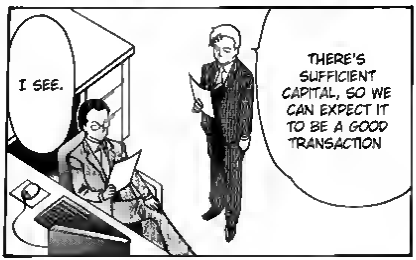
LEGEND CLEAN'S RECORDS ARE ACCURATE
THE LOCATION OF THEIR HQ IS THE SAME AS IN THE DOCUMENTS I RECEIVED FROM THE VICTIM
LEGAL AFFAIRS BUREAU SHINJUKU WEST BRANCH OFFICE
NOW TO CHECK THE ADDRESS OF LEGEND CLEAN'S FRANCHI- SEE...
WE'LL CLEAN YOUR HOME
LEGEND CLEAN MARUG STORE
KASUGA'S METHOD IS TO SQUEEZE AS MUCH MONEY FROM HIS FRAN- CHISEES AS HE CAN.
AND WHEN THEY'VE FINALLY HAD ENOUGH, HE SELLS THE WHOLE COMPANY OFF TO EVADE RESPONSIBILITY.
I'M SURE KASUGA FEELS HE STILL HAS TIME TO DISPOSE OF LEGEND CLEAN.
FOR NOW, THOUGH, THE FRANCHISE OWNERS HAVEN'T COME TOGETHER TO COMPLAIN TO THE PARENT COMPANY YET.



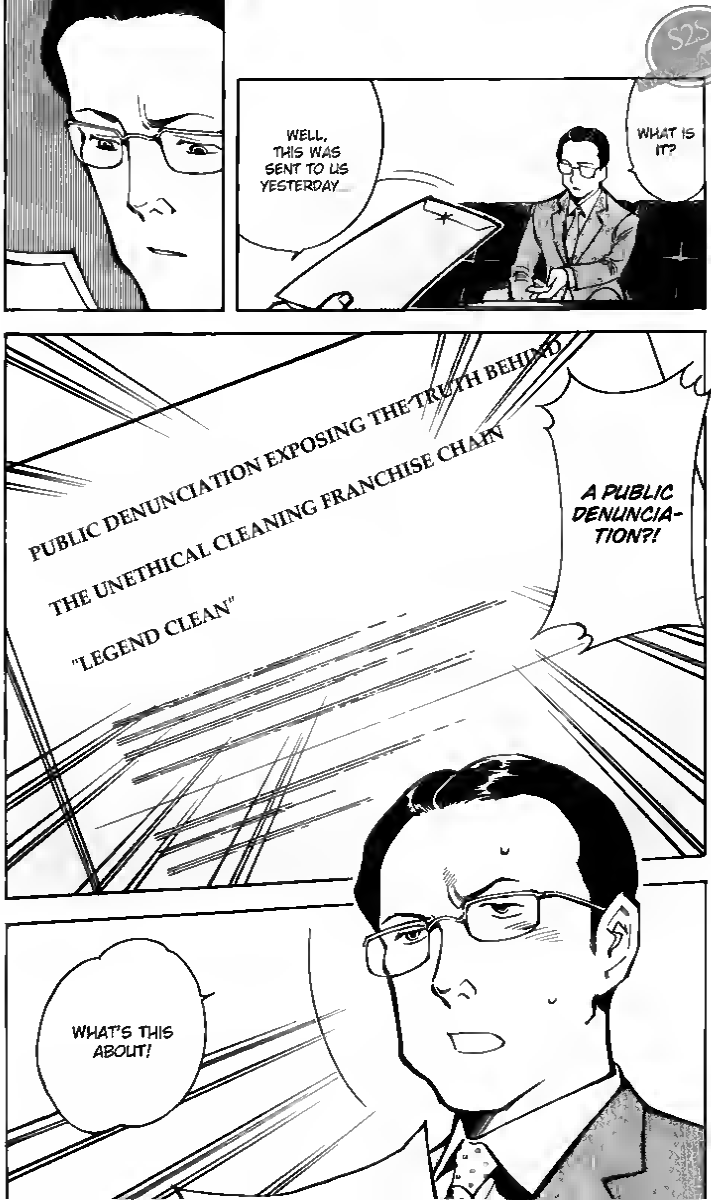
NOTE *MERGER AND ACQUISITION


ACCORDING TO NISHIMATSU, THE AUDITOR MEDIATING THE M&A*, A COMPANY CALLED CITY HOME SALES IS INTERESTED IN BUYING OUT LEGEND CLEAN.

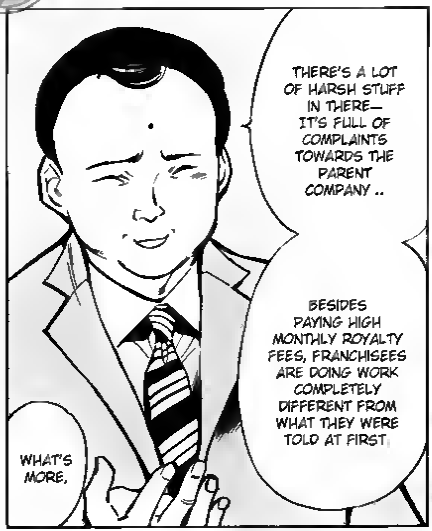




HELLO, PRESIDENT... ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH YOU.
HEY, IT'S BEEN A WHILE, OZAWA-SAN.
HELLO THERE. I'M OZAWA FROM THE JAPAN CLEANING JOURNAL.
LATELY, THE TALK OF EVERY COMPANY I GO TO IS LEGEND CLEAN.
OH, PLEASE.
NO, IT'S TRUE. EVERYONE IS AMAZED BY HOW FAST YOUR FRANCHISE IS GROWING, PRESIDENT KASUGA.
AH, RIGHT.
ARE YOU AWARE OF THIS?

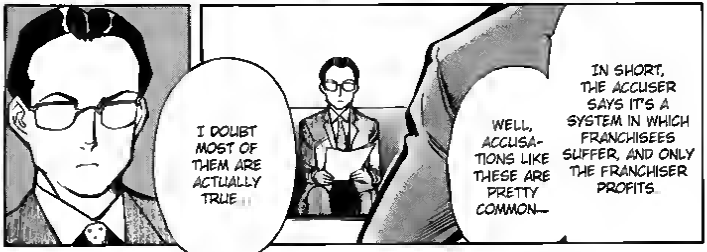

WELL, THIS WAS SENT TO US YESTERDAY...
WHAT IS IT?
PUBLIC DENUNCIATION EXPOSING THE TRUTH BEHIND
THE UNETHICAL CLEANING FRANCHISE CHAIN
"LEGEND CLEAN"
A PUBLIC DENUNCIATION?!
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT!

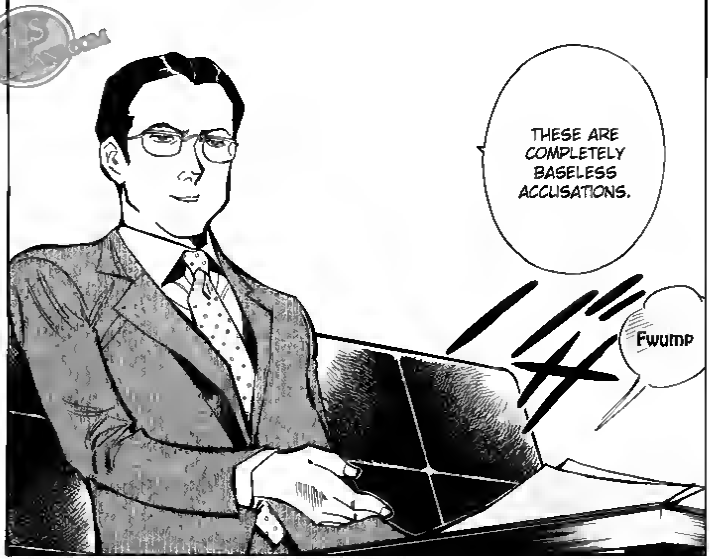
S2S

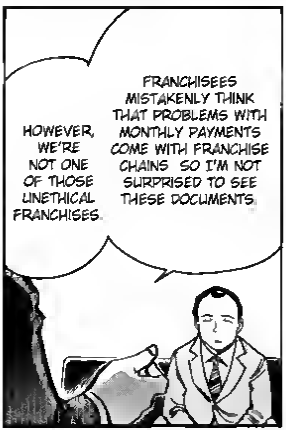

THERE'S A LOT OF HARSH STUFF IN THERE— IT'S FULL OF COMPLAINTS TOWARDS THE PARENT COMPANY ..
BESIDES PAYING HIGH MONTHLY ROYALTY FEES, FRANCHISEES ARE DOING WORK COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY WERE TOLD AT FIRST.
WHAT'S MORE,

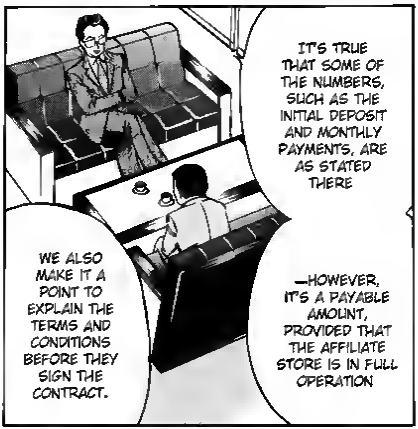
SO YOU WEREN'T AWARE OF IT. IT WAS SENT BY SOMEONE CLAIMING TO BE THE OWNER OF A LEGEND CLEAN FRANCHISE.
OF COURSE, IT WAS SENT UNDER AN ALIAS

ACCORDING TO THE ACCUSATION, LEGEND CLEAN IS MAKING A HIGH PROFIT— IT EVEN STATES THE EXACT FIGURES
IT'S A PRETTY HEFTY AMOUNT.


IN SHORT, THE ACCUSER SAYS IT'S A SYSTEM IN WHICH FRANCHISEES SUFFER, AND ONLY THE FRANCHISER PROFITS.
WELL, ACCUSATIONS LIKE THESE ARE PRETTY COMMON—
I DOUBT MOST OF THEM ARE ACTUALLY TRUE..


THESE ARE COMPLETELY BASELESS ACCUSATIONS.
Fwump


FRANCHISEES MISTAKENLY THINK THAT PROBLEMS WITH MONTHLY PAYMENTS COME WITH FRANCHISE CHAINS. SO I'M NOT SURPRISED TO SEE THESE DOCUMENTS.
HOWEVER, WE'RE NOT ONE OF THOSE UNETHICAL FRANCHISES.

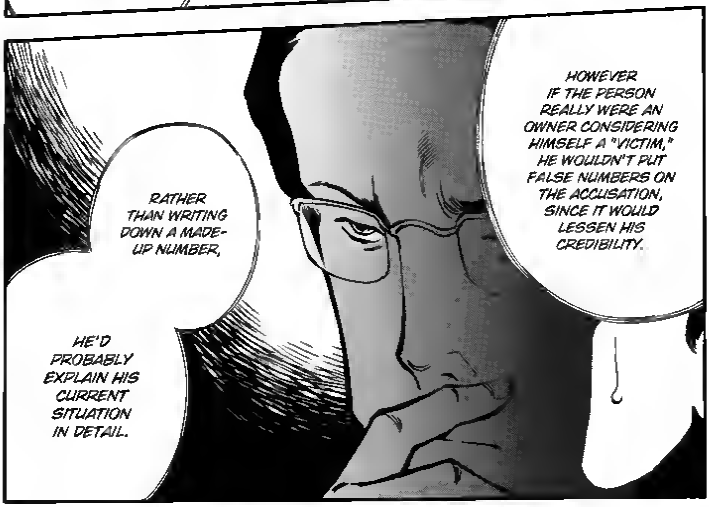

IT'S TRUE THAT SOME OF THE NUMBERS, SUCH AS THE INITIAL DEPOSIT AND MONTHLY PAYMENTS, ARE AS STATED THERE
—HOWEVER, IT'S A PAYABLE AMOUNT, PROVIDED THAT THE AFFILIATE STORE IS IN FULL OPERATION
WE ALSO MAKE IT A POINT TO EXPLAIN THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS BEFORE THEY SIGN THE CONTRACT.

AND THESE PROFIT NUMBERS
OF OUR COMPANY ARE ALL FABRICATED.
WE'RE VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE ADVERTISING FROM LEGEND CLEAN
WE WOULDN'T DREAM OF IT...
OH, NO!
HOWEVER IF YOU DO INTEND TO PUBLISH IT—
I DON'T BELIEVE YOUR NEWSPAPER PLANS TO PUBLISH IT AS A SERIOUS STORY
HOW WAS IT?!
KASUGA-SAN, I LOOKED INTO THE MATTER...
Clatter
IT'S OKAY...
I'M VERY SORRY FOR BRINGING IT UP

OF THE 10 STORES I CONTACTED, ALL OF THEM HAD THOSE DOCUMENTS SENT TO THEM
I'M GUESSING THAT IT WAS SENT TO ALL OF THE FRANCHISEES.
.....
I'M KASUGA FROM LEGEND CLEAN. IS KAMIOKA-SENSEI IN?
YES. THIS IS KAMIOKA ACCOUNTING FIRM.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO, KASUGA-SAN...
.....
Beep
Beep
AH, KAMIOKA-SENSEI... CAN YOU PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AT THE FAX I JUST SENT?
WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

WHAT?! NO WAY!
THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THEY'D INVESTIGATE FOR TAX EVASION
HOWEVER, THE REAL PROBLEM IS THAT THE TAX BUREAU MAY START TO NOTICE, WITH THESE DOCUMENTS OUT IN THE OPEN.
THE PROFIT NUMBERS ARE COMPLETELY MADE UP.
YES, I'VE JUST TAKEN A LOOK.
.....
ESPECIALLY SINCE SOME OF THESE NUMBERS ARE ACCURATE.
.....
Click
INCLUDING OF THOSE AROUND YOU...
ANYWAY, I ADVISE YOU TO BE CAUTIOUS, KASUGA-SAN.

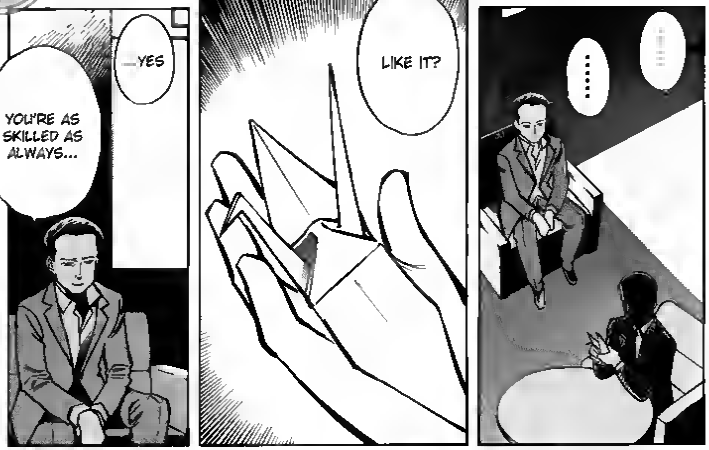
WE COULD REASONABLY GUESS THAT THIS WAS MADE BY A DISSATISFIED OWNER...
CONSIDERING THE ACCURACY OF THIS INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEPOSITS AND THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS,

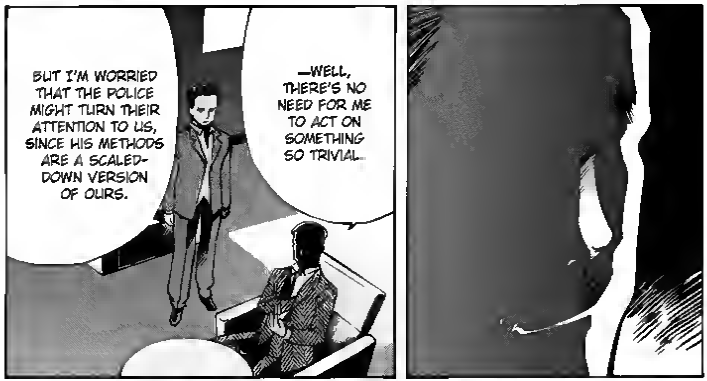

HOWEVER IF THE PERSON REALLY WERE AN OWNER CONSIDERING HIMSELF A "VICTIM," HE WOULDN'T PUT FALSE NUMBERS ON THE ACCUSATION, SINCE IT WOULD LESSEN HIS CREDIBILITY.
RATHER THAN WRITING DOWN A MADE-UP NUMBER,
HE'D PROBABLY EXPLAIN HIS CURRENT SITUATION IN DETAIL.

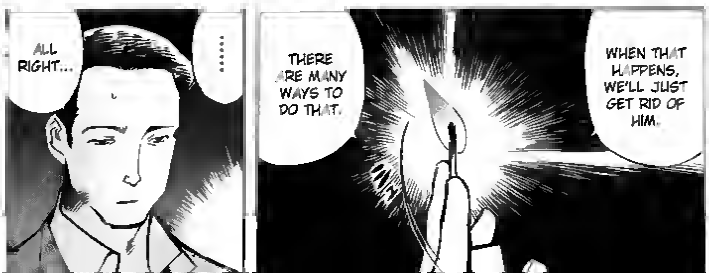
—PLUNGING PEOPLE INTO MISERY—
WHO ON EARTH WROTE THIS?

AND RUNNING AWAY FROM THAT RESPONSIBILITY WHEN THINGS GET ROUGH.
ARE TOTALLY BEYOND REASON, KASUGA.
IF KASUGA HAS A LEAD ABOUT THAT MAN, I'M SURE I COULD FIND SOMETHING OUT...
I WON'T LET YOU GET AWAY! NEVER!!
KA-SU-GA...
BY THE NAME OF KASUGA
HE'S A SWINDLER ...

MANY YEARS AGO... HE WAS PART OF OUR ORGANIZATION WHEN WE CARRIED OUT A LARGE OPERATION.
I DON'T RECALL.
WHAT ABOUT HIM?
BUT I'M WORRIED THAT HIS ETHODS MIGHT GIVE THE POLICE A CLUE...
THIS MAY NOT BE WORTH WORRYING ABOUT,
NOW HE'S CARRYING OUT AN INFERIOR COPY OF THAT OPERATION.
THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THAT THE INVESTIGATIONS OF KASUGA MIGHT THEN LEAD TO US


—YES
YOU'RE AS SKILLED AS ALWAYS...
LIKE IT?
.....


BUT I'M WORRIED THAT THE POLICE MIGHT TURN THEIR ATTENTION TO US, SINCE HIS METHODS ARE A SCALED-DOWN VERSION OF OURS.
—WELL, THERE'S NO NEED FOR ME TO ACT ON SOMETHING SO TRIVIAL.


ALL RIGHT...
.....
THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO DO THAT.
WHEN THAT HAPPENS, WE'LL JUST GET RID OF HIM.

MIKIMOTO-SAN.

Kurosagi (the black swindler)

Written by Takeshi Natsuhara, Illustrated by Kuromaru

KUROSAGI CHAPTER 69

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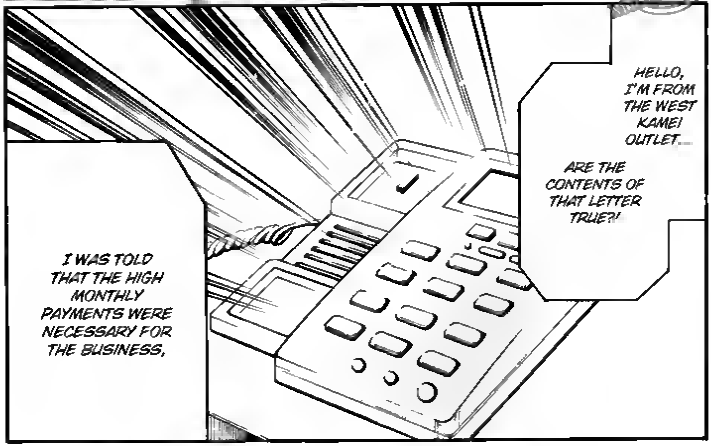
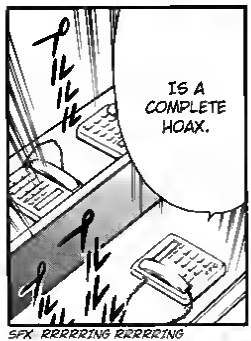
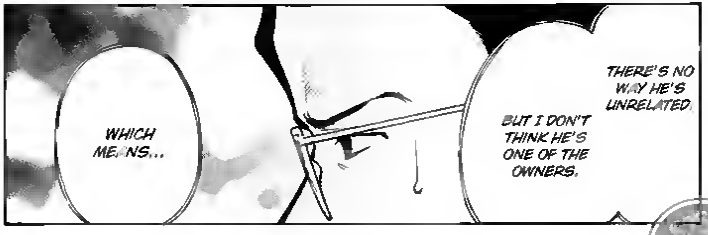

I WAS TOLD THAT THE HIGH MONTHLY PAYMENTS WERE NECESSARY FOR THE BUSINESS,
HELLO, I'M FROM THE WEST KAME! OUTLET...
ARE THE CONTENTS OF THAT LETTER TRUE?!

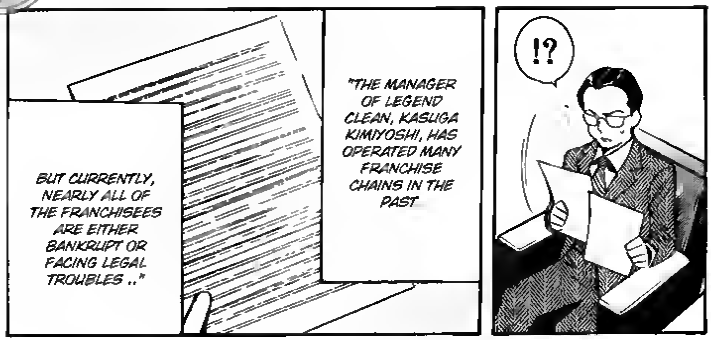


SFX: RRRRRING RRRRRING

SFX: RRRRRING RRRRRING

WHO SENT THESE DOCUMENTS TO THE FRANCHISES...!!
WHO THE HELL WAS IT?!
CHAPTER 63 FRANCHISE BUSINESS STARTUP FRAUD V


WHICH MEANS...
BUT I DON'T THINK HE'S ONE OF THE OWNERS.
THERE'S NO WAY HE'S UNRELATED.


"THE MANAGER OF LEGEND CLEAN, KASUGA KIMIYOSHI, HAS OPERATED MANY FRANCHISE CHAINS IN THE PAST.
BUT CURRENTLY, NEARLY ALL OF THE FRANCHISEES ARE EITHER BANKRUPT OR FACING LEGAL TROUBLES .."
!?

Despite that, the reason Kasuga takes no blame for it is that, when the chain is near bankruptcy, he sells it off to a third party. Thus, he abandons his obligations as its manager.

"IN OTHER WORDS, KASUGA ESTABLISHED ALL THE FRANCHISES, INCLUDING LEGEND CLEAN,
AS FRAUDULENT COMPANIES TO EXPLOIT THE OWNERS FROM THE START...!"
W-WHAT'S THIS?!

WHY ARE ALL THESE DETAILS IN HERE...?!
NO ONE BUT AN INSIDER SHOULD KNOW THIS!!
BE CAUTIOUS OF THOSE AROUND YOU, TOO.

—DON'T ASK ME
WHY WON'T THESE FRANCHISEES STOP CALLING?

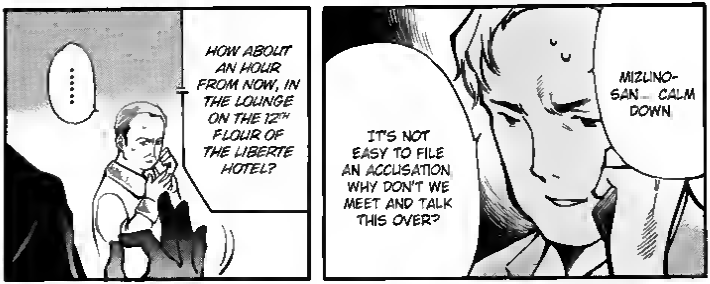
Sigh
Click

COULD IT BE...

THIS HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE...
IT REALLY IS UNSETTLING...
...

Rinn!
Rinn!
...WHO'S THIS?
ARE YOU LEGEND CLEAN'S DIRECTOR GENERAL, HIGUCHI?
WHO'S THIS, YOU SAY...? IT'S ME, MIZUNO.
THE FRANCHISE OWNER YOU RUINED.
MIZUNO ...?!
COULD IT BE... YOU'RE THE ONE SPREADING THOSE LETTERS...?!
I'LL MAKE A FORMAL ACCUSATION AGAINST LEGEND CLEAN!
LISTEN CAREFULLY, HIGUCHI... I'M GONNA TAKE REVENGE ON YOU FOR RUINING ME

W-WAIT, MIZUNO-SAN...!
SAY YOUR PRAYERS! SO LONG!
I'VE GOT ALL THE EVIDENCE I NEED TO EXPOSE YOUR CRIMES!
IF YOU WANT TO THINK SO, GO AHEAD... EITHER WAY, YOU'RE FINISHED.


.....
HOW ABOUT AN HOUR FROM NOW, IN THE LOUNGE ON THE 12TH FLOUR OF THE LIBERTE HOTEL?
MIZUNO-SAN... CALM DOWN
IT'S NOT EASY TO FILE AN ACCUSATION WHY DON'T WE MEET AND TALK THIS OVER?

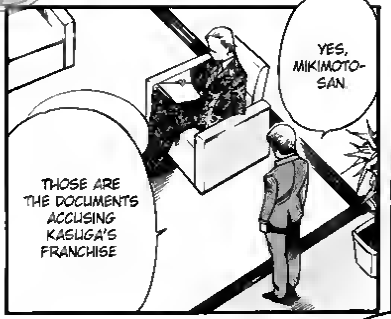
ALL RIGHT...
LET'S TALK.

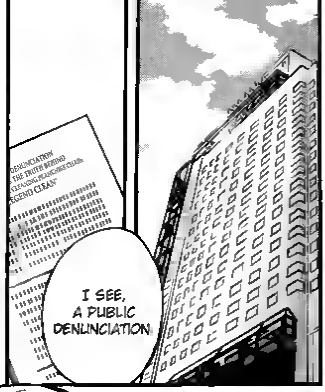
KASUGA-SAN...
EXCUSE ME, I NEED TO GO OUT FOR A BIT.
SOMETHING URGENT, HIGUCHI?
NOTHING THAT MERITS YOUR ATTENTION, KASUGA-SAN.
ONE OF THE OWNERS IS MAKING A FUSS.
I'LL MAKE SURE TO SHUT HIM UP...
.....

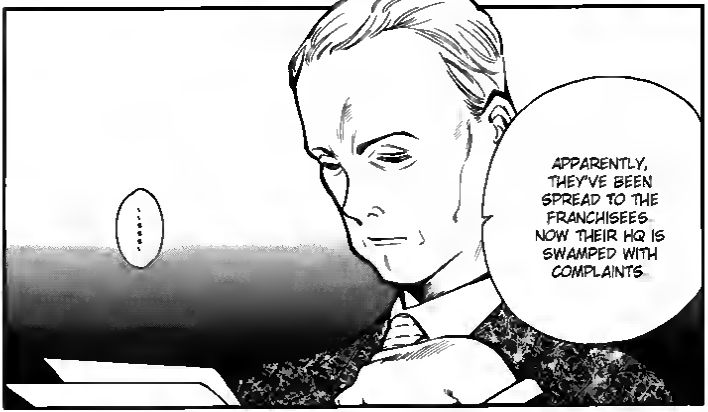
AN EZRA ON THE ROCKS
……
LIBERTE HOTEL 12TH FLOOR
SFX: CLINK
AH!
AH, IT'S OKAY
OH, I'M SORRY!!

I'M SO SORRY... I'LL PAY THE CLEANING COSTS.
YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE TO. IT'S NOT THAT SOAKED.
I'M SURE HE GOT OFF ON THIS FLOOR...
WELL, AT LEAST ACCEPT THIS...
IT ISN'T MUCH
THESE ARE THE ADVANCE TICKETS OF A MOVIE OUR COMPANY IS CO-SPONSORING.
!
OKAY... IF YOU INSIST.

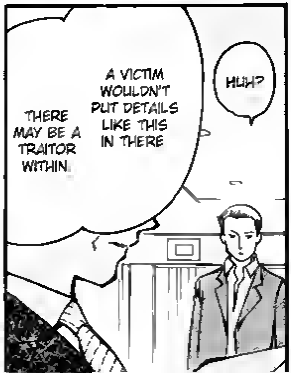
WELL, SEE YOU THEN...
SURE.
.....!!

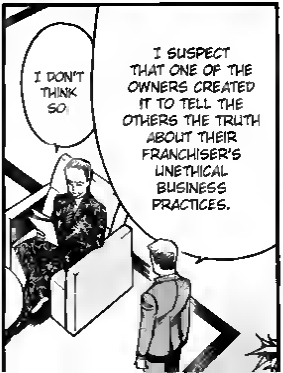

YES, MIKIMOTO-SAN.
THOSE ARE THE DOCUMENTS ACCUSING KASUGA'S FRANCHISE

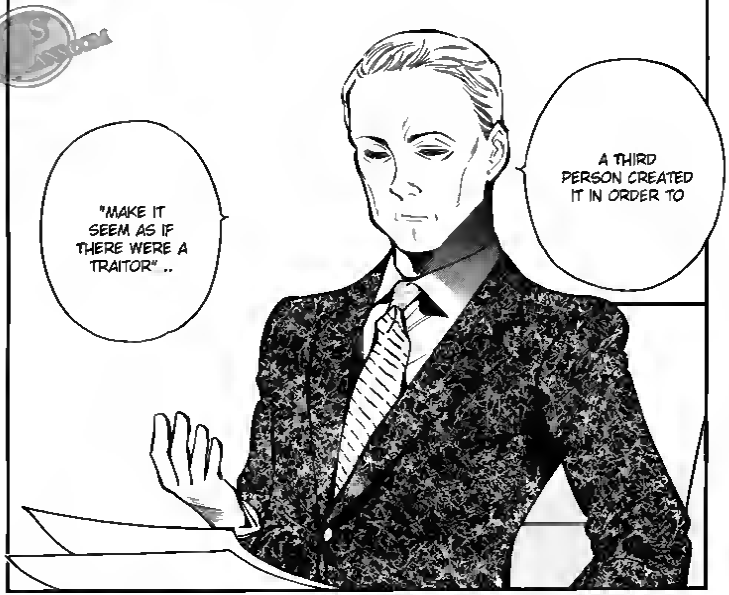

I SEE, A PUBLIC DENUNCIATION.

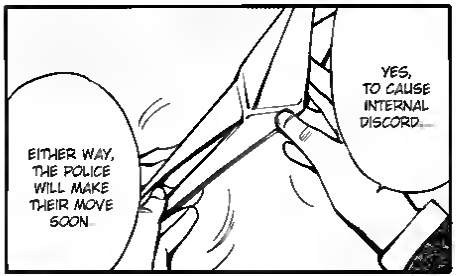

APPARENTLY, THEY'VE BEEN SPREAD TO THE FRANCHISEES. NOW THEIR HQ IS SWAMPED WITH COMPLAINTS.

EITHER THAT, OR—


THERE MAY BE A TRAITOR WITHIN.
A VICTIM WOULDN'T PUT DETAILS LIKE THIS IN THERE
HUH?

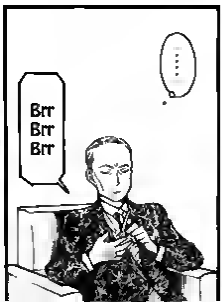

I DON'T THINK SO.
I SUSPECT THAT ONE OF THE OWNERS CREATED IT TO TELL THE OTHERS THE TRUTH ABOUT THEIR FRANCHISER'S UNETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICES.


"MAKE IT SEEM AS IF THERE WERE A TRAITOR"..
A THIRD PERSON CREATED IT IN ORDER TO


YES, TO CAUSE INTERNAL DISCORD...
EITHER WAY, THE POLICE WILL MAKE THEIR MOVE SOON...

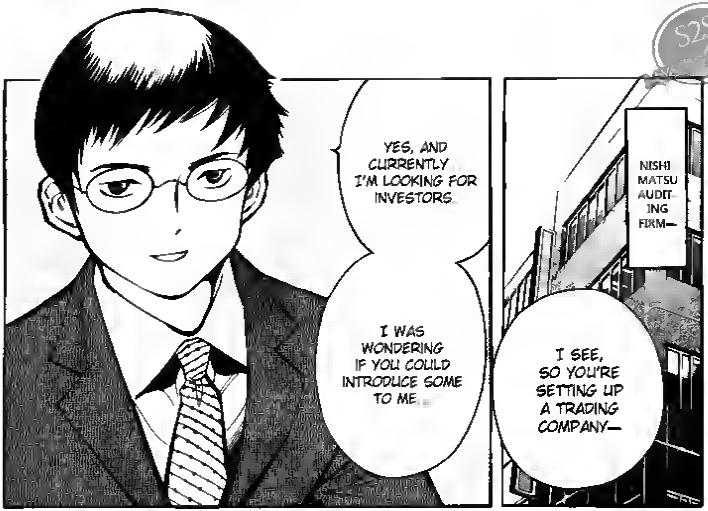
A THIRD PERSON?

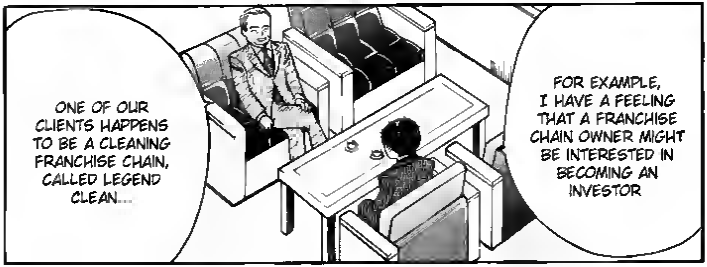
HELLO?
.....

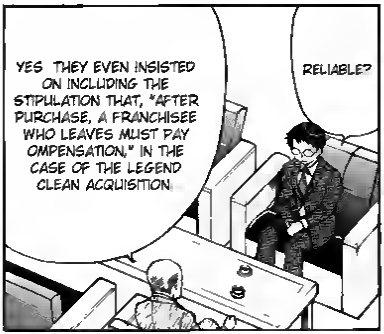

Brr Brr Brr
.....

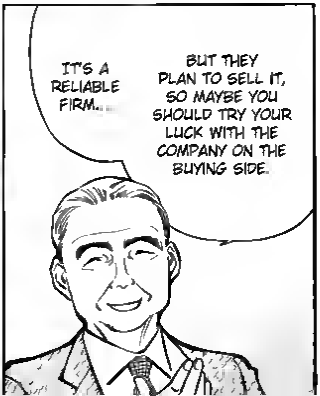
SHALL WE MAKE A MOVE?
...THEN

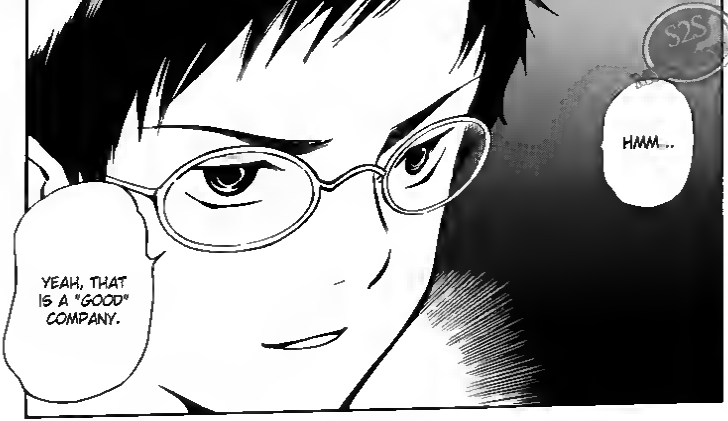
LEAVE THE SHOOTING OF THE STARLING— TO THE HUNTER.
Click
HUH?
IT LOOKS LIKE WE DON'T HAVE TO MAKE A MOVE.
NO...
Hch
...
WHAT IS IT?
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, BUT
HE NEVER CHANGES.

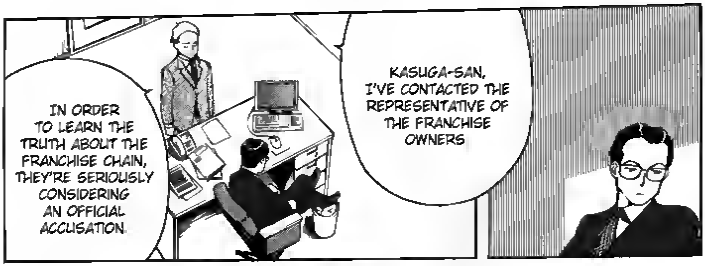

YES, AND CURRENTLY I'M LOOKING FOR INVESTORS.
I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD INTRODUCE SOME TO ME...
NISHI MATSU AUDIT ING FIRM—
I SEE, SO YOU'RE SETTING UP A TRADING COMPANY—

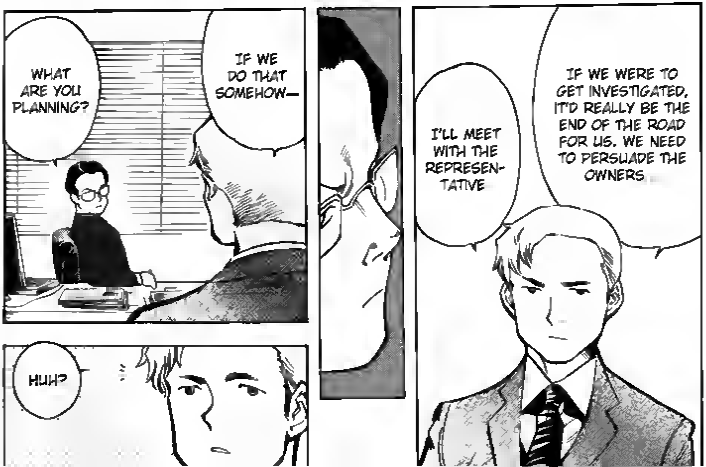

ONE OF OUR CLIENTS HAPPENS TO BE A CLEANING FRANCHISE CHAIN, CALLED LEGEND CLEAN...
FOR EXAMPLE, I HAVE A FEELING THAT A FRANCHISE CHAIN OWNER MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN BECOMING AN INVESTOR


YES. THEY EVEN INSISTED ON INCLUDING THE STIPULATION THAT, "AFTER PURCHASE, A FRANCHISEE WHO LEAVES MUST PAY OMPENSATION," IN THE CASE OF THE LEGEND CLEAN ACQUISITION.
RELIABLE?

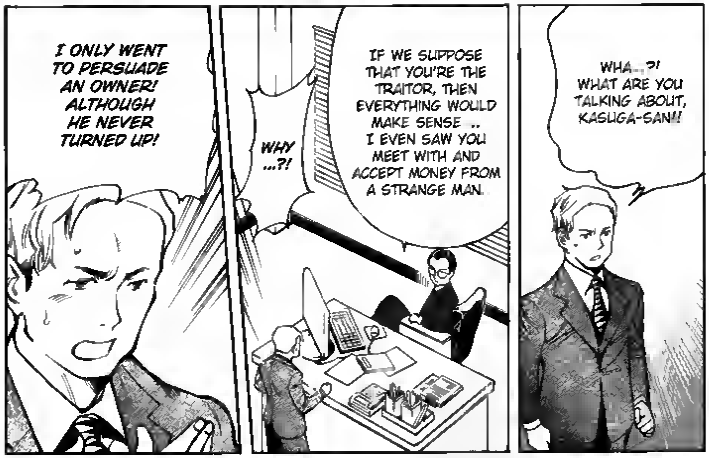

IT'S A RELIABLE FIRM...
BUT THEY PLAN TO SELL IT, SO MAYBE YOU SHOULD TRY YOUR LUCK WITH THE COMPANY ON THE BUYING SIDE.


HMM...
YEAH, THAT IS A "GOOD" COMPANY.


KASUGA-SAN, I'VE CONTACTED THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FRANCHISE OWNERS
IN ORDER TO LEARN THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FRANCHISE CHAIN, THEY'RE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING AN OFFICIAL ACCUSATION


IF WE WERE TO GET INVESTIGATED, IT'D REALLY BE THE END OF THE ROAD FOR US. WE NEED TO PERSUADE THE OWNERS
I'LL MEET WITH THE REPRESEN-TATIVE
IF WE DO THAT SOMEHOW—
WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING?
HUH?

WHO ORDERED YOU TO CREATE THOSE LETTERS?
WHO'S BACKING YOU UP?


I ONLY WENT TO PERSUADE AN OWNER! ALTHOUGH HE NEVER TURNED UP!
WHY ...?!
IF WE SUPPOSE THAT YOU'RE THE TRAITOR, THEN EVERYTHING WOULD MAKE SENSE .. I EVEN SAW YOU MEET WITH AND ACCEPT MONEY FROM A STRANGE MAN.
WHA...?! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, KASUGA-SAN!!

I TEND TO TRUST MY OWN EYES OVER WHAT OTHER PEOPLE TELL ME
UNFORTU-NATELY,

TELL THAT PERSON BEHIND YOU, HIGUCHI... "I CAN'T HAND YOU ANY MORE INTERNAL INFORMATION,
BECAUSE I'VE JUST BEEN FIRED FROM LEGEND CLEAN."
HE'S INSANE!
Uweeen
Knock Knock
EXCUSE ME.
...

...WHO ARE YOU?
I'M SORRY FOR INTRUDING WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT.
DO YOU HAPPEN TO BE THE PRESIDENT OF LEGEND CLEAN, KASUGA-SAN?
I'M FROM BUILDING ESTATE JAPAN.
MY NAME IS OZAKI.

Kurosagi (the black swindler)

Written by Takeshi Natsuhara, Illustrated by Kuromaru

KUROSAGI CHAPTER 63

SCANLATED BY S2SCANS HTTP://MYS2SCANS.COM

Plaasa support Takashi Natsuhara aod Kuromaru
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BUILDING ESTATE ... AH, THAT LARGE FOREIGN HOUSING INDUSTRY FRANCHISE
YES, I'M IN CHARGE OF THE BRANCH IN JAPAN.
LET'S GET TO THE REASON I'M HERE...
SEE, WE'RE AIMING TO EXPAND OUR BUSINESS IN JAPAN.
HOW ABOUT JOINING US AS A SUB-FRANCHISE ...
AND THEN
WE'LL PURCHASE YOUR COMPANY EVENTUALLY--
.....!!

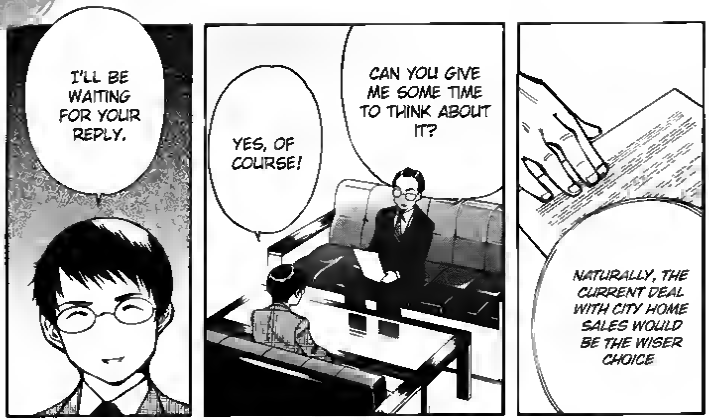
CHAPTER 64

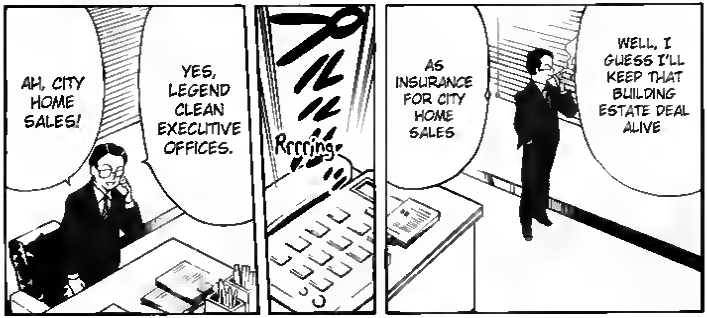
FRANCHISE BUSINESS STARTUP FRAUD VI

BUILDING ESTATE WANTS TO PURCHASE LEGEND CLEAN...?!
WE'RE THINKING OF INCORPORATING YOU INTO OUR COMPANY AS A SUB-FRANCHISE, AND MAKING YOU OUR RENOVATION BRANCH.
THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT LEGEND CLEAN IS A VERY PROMISING FRANCHISE CHAIN...
OUR COMPANY IS CURRENTLY DOING MARKET SURVEYS IN THE HOPE OF ENTERING THE JAPAN MARKET THIS YEAR.
I'M HAPPY THAT THE ACQUISITION CONTRACT WITH CITY HOME SALES IS PROCEEDING SO WELL.
BUT SELLING IT OFF TO A LARGE FOREIGN FIRM SUCH AS BUILDING ESTATE WOULDN'T BE A BAD DEAL, EITHER...
OZAKI-SAN, YOU SAID YOU'D BUY US OUT EVENTUALLY
WHAT WILL YOU DO TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

LET ME SEE. FIRST, WE'LL HAVE LEGEND CLEAN'S STORES JOIN OUR COMPANY.
AT THAT STAGE, YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY A DEPOSIT.
HOW MUCH IS THE DEPOSIT?
TEN MILLION YEN PER STORE.
TEN MILLION!!
I HEAR THAT OUR EXECUTIVES SHOULD MAKE THEIR DECISION ABOUT THIS WITHIN A WEEK
.....
YES, BUT THIS MONEY... WILL EVENTUALLY BE RETURNED TO YOU WHEN WE PURCHASE YOUR COMPANY IN THE FUTURE--
PLUS...
WITHOUT A DOUBT, SELLING IT AT A HIGHER PRICE WOULD BE BETTER.
BUT I'D HAVE TO PAY A HUGE DEPOSIT UP FRONT

S2S

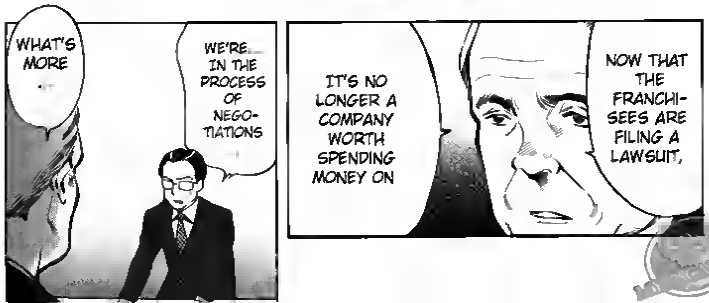

I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOUR REPLY.
YES, OF COURSE!
CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT?
NATURALLY, THE CURRENT DEAL WITH CITY HOME SALES WOULD BE THE WISER CHOICE


AH, CITY HOME SALES!
YES, LEGEND CLEAN EXECUTIVE OFFICES.
Rrrring
AS INSURANCE FOR CITY HOME SALES
WELL, I GUESS I'LL KEEP THAT BUILDING ESTATE DEAL ALIVE

WHAT?

City Home Sales --
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WHY DID YOU CANCEL THE DEAL SO SUDDENLY?!

WE WERE AWARE OF THE SMALL TROUBLES FACING LEGEND CLEAN.
DESPITE THAT, WE WERE STILL INTERESTED IN BUYING THE COMPANY.
HOW-EVER...

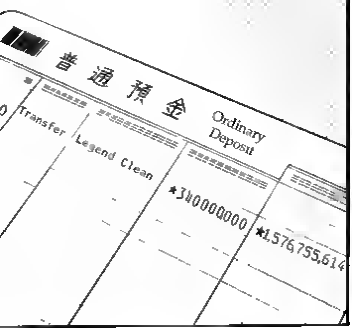

NOW THAT THE FRANCHI-SEES ARE FILING A LAWSUIT,
IT'S NO LONGER A COMPANY WORTH SPENDING MONEY ON
WE'RE IN THE PROCESS OF NEGO-TIATIONS
WHAT'S MORE ...

KASUGA-SAN, OUR RESEARCH ALSO SHOWS THAT
FRANCHISEES ARE ALREADY LEAVING YOUR CHAIN, ONE AFTER ANOTHER
NOW LET'S DISCUSS THE CANCELLATION PROCEDURES OF THE ACQUISITION CONTACT.
WE'LL NEED YOU TO REFUND THE DEPOSIT WE PAID FOR THE PROVISIONAL CONTRACT..
AS WELL AS COMPEN-SATION
THE PROVISIONAL CONTRACT STIPULATED THAT YOU WOULD HAVE TO COMPENSATE US FOR EACH OUTLET THAT LEFT YOUR FRANCHISE.
WHICH IS WHY
IF WE ADD UP THE AMOUNT IN PENALTIES AND COMPENSATIONS YOU, AS OWNER OF LEGEND CLEAN, OWE US A TOTAL OF 52 MILLION YEN.

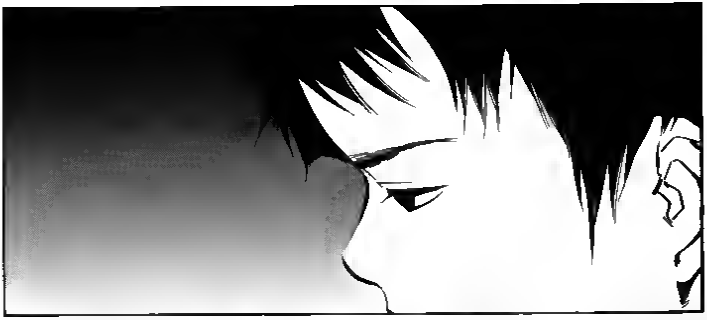
Wham
DAMN IT!!
Rrrrr rrrrr
WHY THE HELL DID IT END UP LIKE THIS!
THIS WHOLE OPERATION WENT AMOK!
NOTHING LIKE THIS HAS EVER HAPPENED BEFORE!!
Slam
ARE YOU PRESIDENT KASUGA? I'M THE LAWYER FOR YOUR FRANCHISE HOLDERS.
IF YOU KEEP REFUSING TO NEGOTIATE WITH US, WE'LL BE FORCED TO ...
.....

Rrrrrrng
HELLO, THIS IS BUILDING ESTATE JAPAN.
THIS IS OZAKI.
OH, PRESIDENT KASUGA!
--HM?
IS THAT TRUE?! SO YOU'LL BE JOINING US AS A SUB-FRANCHISE!
YES, OF COURSE! I'LL HEAD OVER RIGHT AWAY!!
beep
HUMANS MAKE HASTY DECISIONS WHEN THEY'RE UNDER PRESSURE...
EVEN THOUGH THOSE DECISIONS MAY BE FATAL

OKAY THEN
I HOPE YOU HAVE A ROUGH IDEA OF THE AFFILIATION PROCESS I JUST EXPLAINED.
PLEASE SIGN THESE FRANCHISE CONTRACTS.
ONE MORE THING... THE INITIAL DEPOSIT WILL BE VIA BANK TRANSFER.
SO I'D LIKE YOU TO MAKE THE PAYMENT TO BUILDING ESTATE JAPAN'S ACCOUNT OVER HERE.
.....
LEGEND CLEAN CURRENTLY HAS 34 OUTLETS, SO IT'LL BE 340 MILLION YEN
ALL RIGHT
WE'LL DECIDE ON THE PURCHASE ONCE WE'VE CONFIRMED YOUR DEPOSIT
I'LL LOOK FORWARD TO IT.
WITH THIS I'LL BE ABLE TO GET RID OF THAT PAIN IN THE NECK.
NOW TO HURRY AND MAKE THE DEPOSIT.


普通預金
Ordinary Deposit
Transfer
Legend Clean
¥1,576,755,614

Hima war Bank
The next day --



WHAT A DISASTROUS OPERATION.
BUT IF I HAD KEPT THE OWNERSHIP OF LEGEND CLEAN, I'D HAVE LOST EVEN MORE.
I NEARLY HAD TO PAY BACK ALL THE MONEY I MADE THIS TIME AROUND.

A DEPOSIT OF 3.4 MILLION AND 520 THOUSAND IN COMPENSATION
...
NOW ALL THAT'S LEFT IS...

NOW KASUGA IS RUINED!!

WHO IS IT . . ?
click

Knock Knock
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO KEEP THOSE FRANCHISEES SATISFIED UNTIL I GET MY DEPOSIT RETURNED.
THEN I'LL GET BUILDING ESTATE TO PURCHASE THE FRANCHISE, AND MAKE OFF WITH THAT MONEY.

.....
HUH? OZAKI SAN?

I'M LOOKING FOR ANSWERS
UMM... IS THERE A PROBLEM...?
.....
WHO TAUGHT YOU ABOUT THIS BUSINESS?
HEY, KASUGA-SAN
YOU DIRTY SHIROSAGI
A "FRANCHISE FRAUD"
THIS BUSINESS?

TELL ME WHERE "MIKIMOTO" IS.
WHO ARE YOU...
YOU...
TO CRUSH YOU...!
IT'S A COMPANY I MADE UP.
THE COMPANY BUILDING ESTATE DOES, BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE A JAPAN BRANCH.
BUILDING ESTATE JAPAN... YEAH, IT DOESN'T EXIST.

WHA
WHY DID... YOU...
ASK YOUR-SELF.
HEY, KASUGA, I WANT YOU DO ONE MORE THING FOR ME.
I'M SURE YOU KNOW "MIKIMOTO." HE'S A "MASTER" AT FRANCHISE FRAUDS.
IF YOU TELL ME WHERE HE IS, I'LL LET YOU GO.
LET ME GO ...?!
YOUR COMPANY IS DONE FOR. SOON, YOU'LL BE OFFICIALLY CHARGED.
WHEN THAT HAPPENS, YOUR NEW HOME WILL BE BEHIND BARS
RIGHT NOW, YOU'LL ONLY LOSE YOUR MONEY...
MAKE YOUR CHOICE, KASUGA-SAN.
YOU KNOW MIKIMOTO, RIGHT?
.....

Rrrring
I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS...
I ONLY KNOW HIS NUMBER.

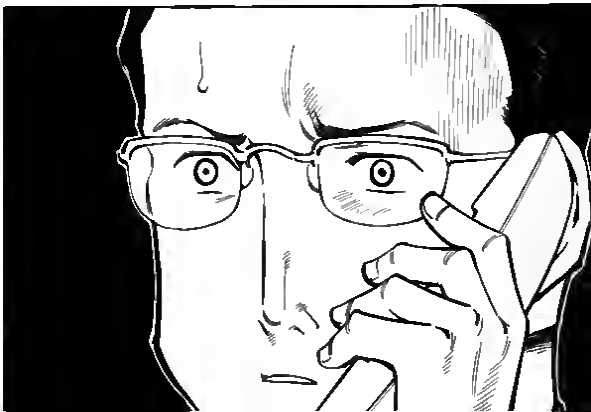
FESS UP, KASUGA-SAN.

I HAVEN'T... SEEN MIKIMOTO... IN A LONG TIME...

YES...
.....

Rrrring
Rrrrrring

WHAT IS IT...?
Click



!?
I WAS TOLD THE WARRANT HAS BEEN ISSUED
.....
I'M TURNING MYSELF IN
THAT CALL... WHO WAS IT FROM?!
I HAVE A FAMILY TOO AS LONG AS I SURRENDER
FAM-ILY ?!
DON'T TRY TO BE FUNNY, KASUGA... DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY FAMILIES YOU'VE DESTROYED...!
HOW DARE YOU BRING UP SUCH A WORD!!
SO WHAT?! YOU WANT TO KILL ME?! WILL YOU BE SATISFIED IF I DIE?!

YOU, MIKIMOTO-EVERYONE!!
YEAH...! I'D LIKE TO KILL WITH THESE HANDS!
NOT THAT YOU EVEN CAN...

I'M NOT LIKE YOU GUYS!!
BUT I WON'T KILL PEOPLE ..!

NO.
THE THREAT WORKED.

KASUGA JUST CAME OUT, MIKIMOTO-SAN...

I'M DONE HERE
YES
LET'S LEAVE
Click
IT'S BECAUSE THAT PERSON MADE THE POLICE MOVE.
I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING ..
AS LONG AS HE'S THERE-
MIKIMOTO HAS SOMEONE MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU REALIZE BACKING HIM.

THERE'S NO WAY SOMEONE LIKE YOU
COULD LAY A FINGER ON HIM.

.....
Clank Clank

beep
I GUESS HE WON'T ANSWER.
EVEN IF I ASK HIM WHY HE INTERFERED,
Katsuragi
THAT CALL... I'M SURE IT WAS FROM MIKIMOTO.
...BUT I
FAILED TO GRASP THE LINK BETWEEN KASUGA AND MIKIMOTO.
WELL...

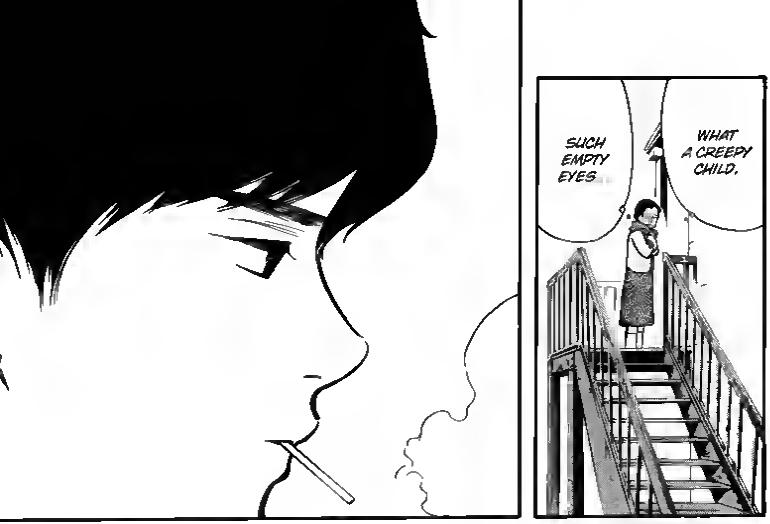
I FOUND OUT THAT MIKIMOTO'S STILL ALIVE IN THIS WORLD
RIGHT NOW,
THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME...
ブォォォォ..

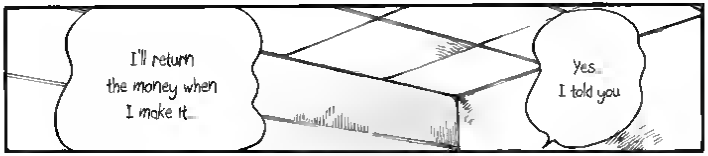
SPECIAL ONE-SHOT

KUROSAGI SIDE STORY

YUZURU
SFX: VRRRRRM
SFX: FWSSSSSH
NOT GETTING ON TODAY, EITHER?
GRANNY?
NO, I'M NOT GETTING ON

SFX: VRRRRRM
IT'S A PAIN TO HAVE TO STOP EVERY TIME...
THEN PLEASE REFRAIN FROM SITTING ON THAT BENCH EVERY SINGLE DAY—
SFX: FWSSSSSH
EVEN I WOULD LIKE TO GET ON IF I COULD...
THAT CHILD'S THERE AGAIN
3
I WONDER WHY SUCH A YOUNG MAN IS SITTING AT A BUS STOP EVERY DAY...
WELL, I'M DOING THE SAME THING, THOUGH.

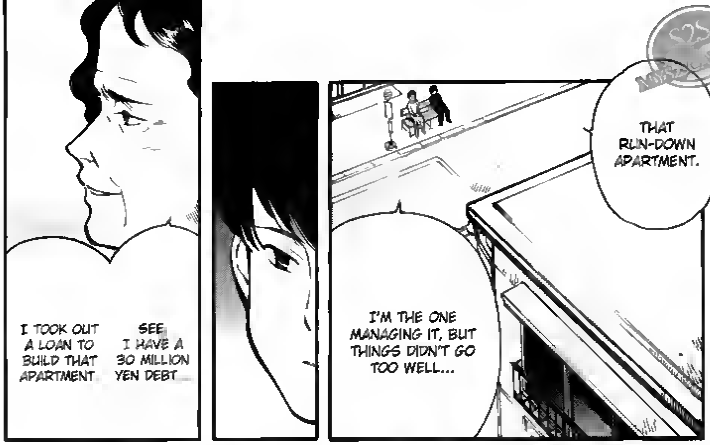

SUCH EMPTY EYES...
WHAT A CREEPY CHILD.

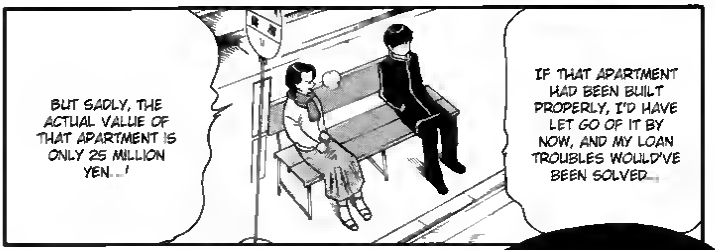

I'll return the money when I make it...
Yes... I told you

THE LAND AND BUILDING ARE VALUED AT 30 MILLION YEN, SO IT'S JUST ENOUGH TO SETTLE YOUR 30 MILLION DEBT!
DON'T YOU THINK NOW'S THE TIME TO SELL THE APARTMENT OR LAND?
LOOK, HIOKA-SAN YOU'VE BEEN TELLING ME THAT FOR A YEAR NOW!
IF YOU DON'T RETURN THE MONEY SOON, WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE DRASTIC ACTIONS!!
O-Okay

S2S
Sigh
I'll definitely repay you.
Anyway, please wait a little longer.
IWAUG
WHAT'S A YOUNG MAN LIKE YOU DOING AT THIS TIME OF THE DAY.

MONEY WON'T JUST FALL FROM THE SKY. YOU NEED TO WORK FOR IT.
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING WITHOUT MONEY, EITHER.
EASY DOES IT...
WELL, THE WORLD'S A HARDER PLACE TO LIVE NOW
I GUESS YOU YOUNG ONES HAVE YOUR OWN WORRIES...
OTHERWISE YOU WOULDN'T BE SITTING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS DAY IN AND DAY OUT...
HOW ABOUT I TELL YOU MY PROBLEM?
IT'S THAT OVER THERE.

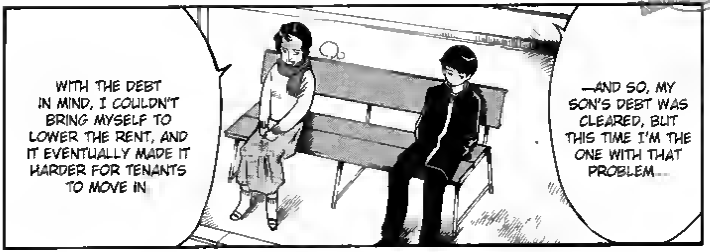

I TOOK OUT A LOAN TO BUILD THAT APARTMENT...
SEE, I HAVE A 30 MILLION YEN DEBT...
I'M THE ONE MANAGING IT, BUT THINGS DIDN'T GO TOO WELL...
THAT RUN-DOWN APARTMENT.


BUT SADLY, THE ACTUAL VALUE OF THAT APARTMENT IS ONLY 25 MILLION YEN...!
IF THAT APARTMENT HAD BEEN BUILT PROPERLY, I'D HAVE LET GO OF IT BY NOW, AND MY LOAN TROUBLES WOULD'VE BEEN SOLVED...

!
AN "OVERLOAN"?

2 YEARS AGO, WHEN I BUILT THAT APARTMENT MY SON HAD A 5 MILLION YEN DEBT...
IF IT WERE DUE TO GAMBLING, I'D HAVE JUST SCOLDED HIM AND THAT WOULD BE IT. HOWEVER, IT WAS A DEBT MADE FROM PAYING THE HOSPITAL CHARGES FOR MY HUSBAND.
I REALLY WANTED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. THAT'S WHY I WAS EASILY TALKED INTO IT BY THE REAL ESTATE AGENT
MY, MY...! YOU'RE SURPRISINGLY CLEVER
YES, THAT THING CALLED AN "OVERLOAN."
IN OTHER WORDS, WE'LL JUST RIG THE PROPERTY'S APPRAISAL
AND DECLARE THE 25 MILLION PROPERTY TO BE WORTH 30 MILLION.
Tachinohara
Real Estate President
Tachinohara Shinichi
IF WE DEDUCT THE CONSTRUCTION COSTS, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO USE THE 5 MILLION YEN TO REPAY YOUR SON'S DEBT.
IF WE DO THAT, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO TAKE OUT A LOAN OF THAT AMOUNT, WON'T YOU?
YOU ALSO HAVE LAND YOU CAN MORTGAGE.

S2S MANGA


WITH THE DEBT IN MIND, I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO LOWER THE RENT, AND IT EVENTUALLY MADE IT HARDER FOR TENANTS TO MOVE IN.
—AND SO, MY SON'S DEBT WAS CLEARED, BUT THIS TIME I'M THE ONE WITH THAT PROBLEM...

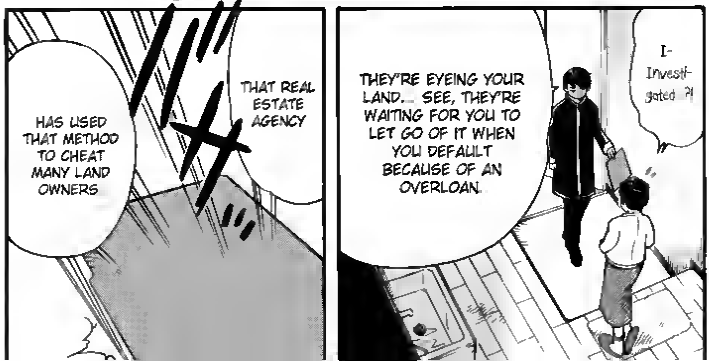
I DOUBT COMPLAINING ABOUT IT TO YOU WILL SOLVE ANYTHING, THOUGH...
—LOOK, IT'S THAT BUS.

LEAVING NOW?
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING UNTIL I SETTLE MY DEBT
HE'S INVITING ME TO STAY WITH HIM, BUT YOU SEE MY DEBT'S A SECRET...
MY SON LIVES IN THE TOWN AT THE LAST STOP.

IF I COULD JUST DO SOMETHING ABOUT MY DEBT... THEN I WOULDN'T NEED THAT APARTMENT ANYMORE...

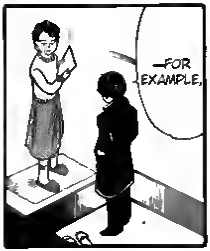
.....

I INVESTIGATED YOUR REAL ESTATE AGENT.


SFX: FWMP
THAT REAL ESTATE AGENCY
HAS USED THAT METHOD TO CHEAT MANY LAND OWNERS
THEY'RE EYEING YOUR LAND... SEE, THEY'RE WAITING FOR YOU TO LET GO OF IT WHEN YOU DEFAULT BECAUSE OF AN OVERLOAN.
I-Investigated...?!

IN SHORT, THIS WAS PLANNED FROM THE START.
ONCE YOU DEFAULT ON THE LOAN, THEY'LL ACT HELPFUL AND SAY, "WE'LL HELP DISPOSE OF IT BEFORE IT GOES UP FOR AUCTION", WHEN THEY ACTUALLY WANT TO SELL IT *PRIVATELY.

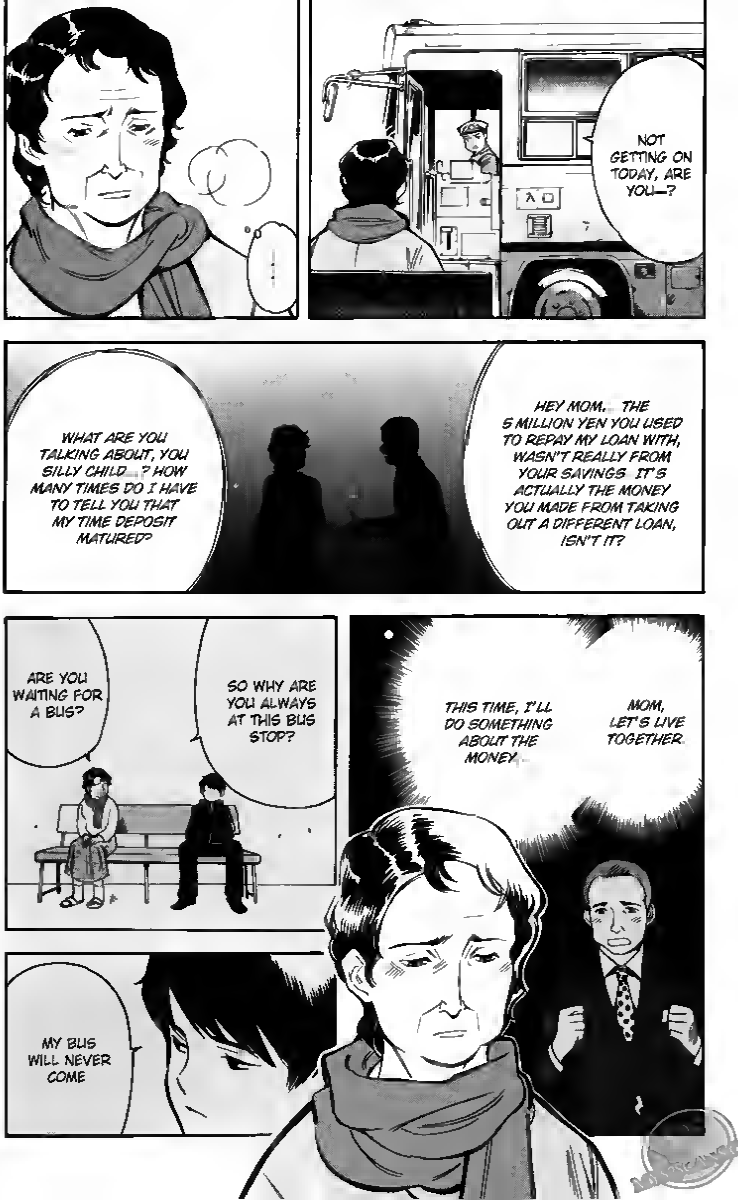
NOTE: *WHEN THE DEBTOR SELLS THEIR MORTGAGED PROPERTY ON THE OPEN MARKET, WITH THE CONSENT OF THE CREDITOR.



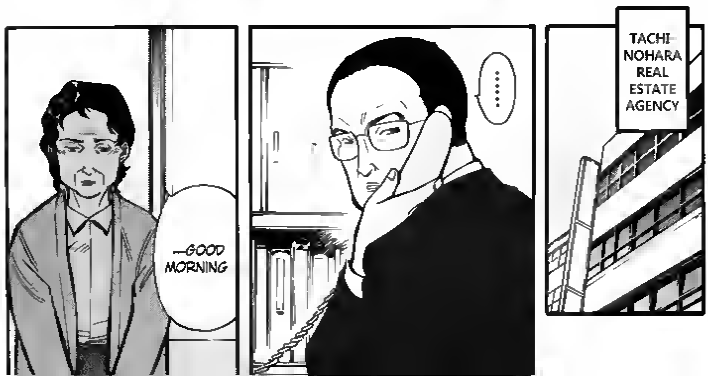
IF YOU WERE TO DECEIVE THEM INTO THINKING THAT YOU ALSO OWN ANOTHER PLOT OF LAND,
AND PUT THAT LAND ON MORTGAGE TO REQUEST A LOAN FROM THE REAL ESTATE AGENT— YOU'D BE ABLE TO SNATCH THEIR MONEY...

W-what?! Why
OF COURSE, TO SHOW SOMEONE ELSE'S LAND AS YOURS, WE'LL NEED TO SWITCH THE RECORDS.
BUT I KNOW SOMEONE WHO CAN DO THAT FOR A LITTLE MONEY
But isn't that... A crime...?
LEGALLY, YES
That's not the problem.
THE FINAL DECISION IS YOURS.
BUT YOU CAN'T PROVE IT...
I CAN FORGE ALL THE DOCUMENTS ON MY SIDE. SO IT WON'T CAUSE YOU ANY TROUBLE

DO YOU KNOW WHAT WE CALL PEOPLE LIKE THAT?
BUT LET ME REMIND YOU THAT THE REAL ESTATE AGENT CHEATED, AND PLUNGED YOU DEEP INTO DEBT, IN ORDER TO TAKE YOUR PROPERTY AWAY FROM YOU.
SHIROSAGI!
YOU WANT TO STAY WITH YOUR FAMILY, DON'T YOU?
SFX: FWSSSSSH


NOT GETTING ON TODAY, ARE YOU—?
HEY MOM... THE 5 MILLION YEN YOU USED TO REPAY MY LOAN WITH, WASN'T REALLY FROM YOUR SAVINGS. IT'S ACTUALLY THE MONEY YOU MADE FROM TAKING OUT A DIFFERENT LOAN, ISN'T IT?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, YOU SILLY CHILD...? HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT MY TIME DEPOSIT MATURED?
MOM, LET'S LIVE TOGETHER.
THIS TIME, I'LL DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE MONEY...
SO WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS AT THIS BUS STOP?
ARE YOU WAITING FOR A BUS?
MY BUS WILL NEVER COME

BUT NOW I HAVE NONE
IN THE PAST, I HAD A HOME
NEVER COME—? AND YOUR HOME?


TACHI-NOHARA REAL ESTATE AGENCY
.....
—GOOD MORNING

HIOKA-SAN!
ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU! IT'S BEEN A WHILE!
HOW'S YOUR APARTMENT DOING?
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, IT ISN'T DOING VERY WELL...
AND I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD GIVE ME A LOAN.
YOU SWINDLER!
A LOAN...
UNFORTUNATELY THAT'S A LITTLE...
PLEASE
HOW ABOUT THIS?
MAYBE IT CAN BE MORTGAGED.

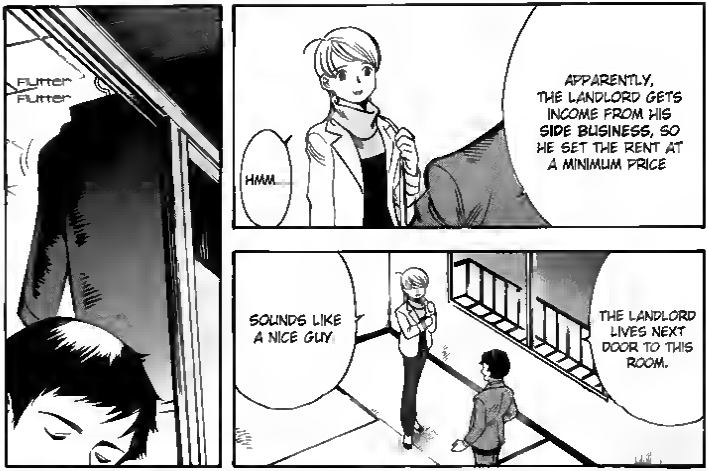
IT'S ANOTHER PLOT OF LAND I OWN.
HOWEVER, IT'S BEEN ABANDONED ALL THIS WHILE...
SO YOU HAD ANOTHER PLOT OF LAND, HIOKA-SAN...
YES
SO, CAN I HAVE A LOAN?
.....
PLEASE LET ME THINK ABOUT IT...
.....

IT'S A PRETTY NICE PLOT OF LAND
TO THINK THAT THAT HAG KEPT SUCH A NICE PLOT OF LAND A SECRET
THE RECORDS WERE CLEAN, TOO
THIS LAND IS DEFINITELY HERS.
LOOKS LIKE THAT OLD GRANNY'S SWAMPED BY THE DEBT FROM THE OVERLOAN.
JUST MY LUCK. I'LL LEND HER MONEY WITH THIS LAND AS MORTGAGE...
THEN PRESSURE HER EVEN MORE AND TAKE NOT JUST THE APARTMENT AND ITS LAND, BUT THIS PLOT OF LAND AS WELL...!!
.....

THAT REAL ESTATE AGENCY WILL EVENTUALLY REALIZE THAT THE MORTGAGED LAND ACTUALLY BELONGS TO SOMEONE ELSE BUT NOT FOR A WHILE.
IT REALLY IS A LAUGH-ABLE STORY...
EVEN THOUGH IT'S AN AMOUNT I LOST SO MUCH SLEEP OVER
USE THIS 5 MILLION YEN WE STOLE FROM THEM TO REPAY YOUR LOANS, AND FIND A PLACE TO STAY WITH YOUR SON.
YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT... BECAUSE THEY'RE BUSY ENOUGH TRYING TO HIDE THEIR OWN ILLEGAL ACTS.
I STILL HAVEN'T HEARD YOUR NAME...
BY THE WAY
...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

IT'S KUROSAKI.
SFX: FWSSSH
NOT GOING TO GET ON.
I'M GETTING ON.

2 YEARS LATER—
SO YOU'RE A CURRENT STUDENT, MISS—
LOOKING FOR A NEW PLACE?
YEAH.
ANYWAY, I'M REALLY LOW ON MONEY, AND I CAN'T AFFORD MY CURRENT APARTMENT NOW.
I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS ROOM—
EVEN AT THIS PRICE, IT HAS A SHOWER AND KITCHEN.
A FEW YEARS AGO, AN ELDERLY WOMAN USED TO MANAGE IT, BUT FOR SOME REASON, SHE HANDED IT TO ANOTHER PERSON.
NOW THE LANDLORD IS A YOUNG MAN.


Flutter
Flutter
HMM...
APPARENTLY, THE LANDLORD GETS INCOME FROM HIS SIDE BUSINESS, SO HE SET THE RENT AT A MINIMUM PRICE
SOUNDS LIKE A NICE GUY.
THE LANDLORD LIVES NEXT DOOR TO THIS ROOM.

WITH A LANDLORD LIKE THAT, I'D FEEL AT EASE IF ANY TROUBLE WERE TO OCCUR—

z

The early Black egret catches the White egret……

ILLUSTRATION STAFF

Sasahara Yukiko
Haga Kimiko
Sugisaki Eiri
Nonaka Saori

ILLUSTRATION HELP

Takagi Katsuhiko

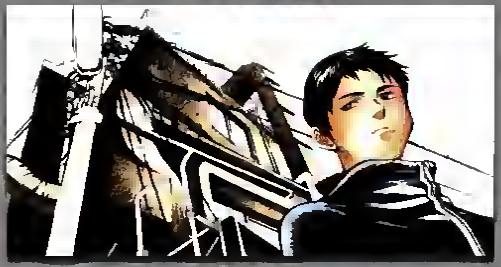
Thank you!!

Come on, there must be something.
I bet you could find some if you looked.
So there's no info on any Shirosagi?
Hey, lately you haven't been calling.
HELLOOO, ARE YOU LISTENING?

Kurosagi (The Black Swindler)

Author: Takeshi Natsuhara ~ Illustrator: Kuromaru

Chapter 64.5



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Kurosagi (the black swindler)

Written by Takeshi Natsuhara, Illustrated by Kuromaru

KUROSAGI CHAPTER 64

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